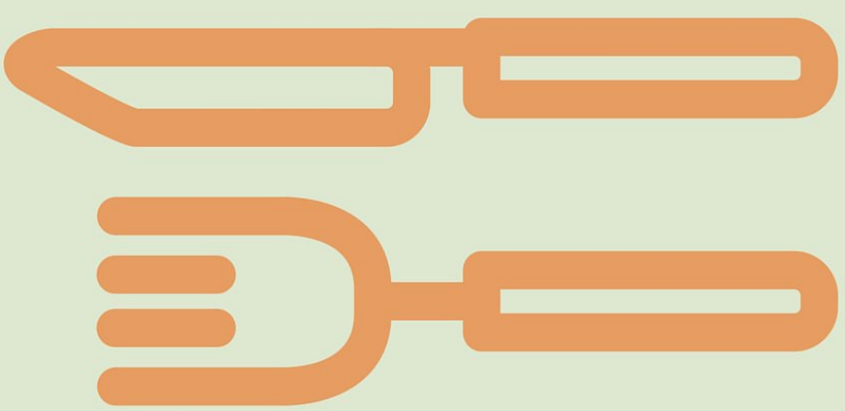
COOK OF THE MERCENARY CORP

VOLUME 2 - ME AND THE JAILOR-SAN



Cook of the Mercenary Corp

Volume 2 - Me and the Jailor-san

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Chapter 24 - Jailor-san and Sake-steamed Clams

Jail.

That is, something created in the Castle's underground or under the guardroom.

Different from a prison, here is where suspects are arrested before their crime has been judged and await their punishment.

Basically, each person is confined in their own rooms, and monitored.

The inside of the room is dim, so much so that the sunlight can only somehow barely get in.

After the daylight passes, having a lifestyle with just candle light, even that was directly put out.

Doing so, the light has no way of coming in, and true darkness filled the space.

There is no hope nor future.

With certainty, I can say that it is a dark place of suffering just for those subject to punishment.

Is what I said but, I didn't find it that painful.

Hello, it's Shuri.

The man who got arrested for knocking over the Feudal Lord's silver wine glass the day before.

I'm used to the dark and such. Rather I'm happy I can sleep so much.

But the cold is a little hard to bear with.

I wonder how everyone is doing.

Around this time, it would be good if it didn't become a big deal because of me.

But, if I had ignored that then it would have become a big deal anyway….

"Shut up criminal. Be quiet inside the jail."

"Yes, sorry!"

This jail is a peculiar thing underneath the castle.

Obviously it's made of stone, and the iron bars are of a special toughness.

It was a cruel place where there were only straw sandals on the stone floors.

This is a place for the sake of monitoring the most serious criminals.

The one to monitor someone like me was just one muscular man.

"Geez, I can't even drink in peace…."

A height surpassing 2 meters. Trimmed hair. A terrifyingly grim face.

A person who since coming here I've no impression of him doing anything but drink.

That is the person monitoring me.

"Excuse me, is it alright for Jailor-san to drink alcohol?"

"Aahh!?"

"It's nothing, I'm sorry!"

Scary. Even scarier than Ganglabe-san.

"….No matter what a feeble man like yourself does, you wouldn't be able to defeat me.

Besides, those iron bars will definitely not break. It's fine even without a jailor"

I-isn't that negligence of duty?

He's even eating snacks along with it…..

"The thing you're taking out of your bag, what is it?"

"Ah? Clams, you know, clams. Draining it off just like this, it's a snack you eat while drinking alcohol.

You eat it with this fish sauce.

There's none for you"

Clams?

"The alcohol you're drinking, is it wine?"

“Rice wine. Just be quiet already”

Wine from rice. Clams.

Ah, Sake-steamed Clams.

“Excuse me, I have a request”

“Rejected”

“That, won’t you share some with me?

I can make a delicious alcoholic snack with clams and sake”

Even I wanted to eat some.

Doing so, the Jailor made a puzzled look as he looks at the clam and alcohol.

“With this?”

“Yes. Then if we have a pot, and fish sauce, it will perfect”

I was somehow able sneak the portable stove in.

When I was being dragged away, they treated it as paper and it wasn’t confiscated.

“….Try it. It’ll be good for killing time”

“Understood”

Receiving the pot and fish sauce, I begin the preparation to heat up the portable stove.

Even though I said that, sake-steaming isn’t something which can be done so easily.

There’s no ingredients and the like.

Despite that, I fry it, add the sake, then put the lid on.

Once it’s steamed, it’s complete by adding some fish sauce.

“Try some”

“Oh, it smells good”

Feeling excited, Jailor-san accepted.

Taking a bite, he opened his mouth a little.

“It tastes alcoholic but it isn’t as strong as sake. The fish sauce also leaves a good impression.”

Right? That’s what’s good about sake-steaming.

There’s nothing better than drinking sake together with this.

“You, you’re a pretty interesting guy”

“Is that so”

“Ah. Normal criminals wouldn’t do something like cooking”

“There’s also probably no Jailor-san who would hand over ingredients to such a criminal so they could cook either”

“No doubt about it”

Jailor-san laughs, Karakara.

“It seems that I won’t be bored anymore”

That’s how my strange lifestyle together with the Jailor-san started.

There was a record left behind about how “King of Meals” Shuri Azuma was imprisoned for a period of time.

Without making sure of the charges, ranging from charges such as murder to theft, the truth was unknown.

From the testimonies of the six heroes, it’s said that it was an unreasonable crime due to disrespect but, even now the truth is buried in darkness.

However at that time, Shru Azuma had a fateful encounter.

Jailor, Gann Rubber.

Despairing his own life, a man leading a life of laziness.

As a result of meeting Shuri Azuma, his life was greatly changed.

The best pupil of Shuri Azuma.

The one who was called on by fate as “Successor of Meals”.

In a future not too far way.

Image from: JustOneCookbook)

Chapter 25 - Troubles and Butter Potato

The knack to jail lifestyle is to endure the coldness.

If you're asking what I mean, simply speaking, under these medieval buildings which have no heaters or anything, it becomes intensely cold.

In addition to the structure which makes even sunlight hard to reach, the ways and places to become warm is staggeringly limited.

Basically, I really want to eat something warm, is what I think.

This is Shuri speaking from the jail.

It's almost been one week of jail lifestyle. The food is simple as well. The entertainment is nonexistent too. It can't be helped that I have nothing but spare time.

The Jailor-san, Gann Rubber-san. Recently we've become slightly close.

Maybe it's because he's fond of Sake-steamed Clams but, he's increased his requests to secretly make it.

Somehow it seems like there's something worrying him and he's making a gloomy face.

"Eh? There's a food shortage?"

When I ask, Gann-san nodded.

"Ahh. We had won the war but, a political strife happened inside the castle.

It's mainly about how to deal with you."

"Me?"

"The strife is separated and fought by two big influences.

The reflection faction which the first prince is leading is against you being

killed.

They don't want to make Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp into an enemy and are polishing a plan to take you in, you who can make the dish which the Feudal Lord likes.

The military faction which the second prince leads decides that you should be killed.

The reason is well, the main reason is that insolence towards the feudal lord. And also, it seems that the second prince cannot forgive the insolence of knocking off the wine glass which he gifted the first prince and feudal lord for their birthdays."

"That, how does that tie in with the food shortage?"

"Well, perhaps I should say each faction's reserve food supply is reserved exclusively for them.

As a result, the wheat and gold in the territory is concentrated on the factions and thus there's a food shortage"

How pointless.

If it's like that, then I prefer them to just kill me off.

"Don't look so worried"

Gann-san looks at me and says.

"Listen, you are actually the victim.

Why you were arrested here, I haven't asked about the details.

However, by eating your cooking, I understand just how much consideration you put out for the other person.

Endure it for now."

"…Yes. Ah, speaking of which"

I wanted to ask him something that was on my mind.

"What happened with Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp….?"

Gann-san's face turned dark.

“…I can’t tell you that”

Taking out a potato from his bag, Gann-san starts to gnaw on it.

That, I wonder if that’s a steamed potato.

“An order came from above, to not tell you information of Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp.

Don’t ask right now.”

“Is that so?”

I felt a little discouraged.

No no, let’s stop being so gloomy. It’s not like me.

“By the way, is that a steamed potato?”

“Ah. Recently even the circulation of food can’t be like it was, there’s nothing but this.

Geez, a potato which is only steamed, it can only taste bad”

“That’s not true you know?”

Well of course, a potato which has no taste would obviously taste bad.

“Do you have butter?”

“Ah? Butter? Well, I have it though”

“Will you share some?”

Butter and potato too.

Of course it should be Butter Potato!

I prepare the stove and the pot, now begins the cooking.

I fill up the pot with water and boiling it, after it boils I put it the potatoes and put the lid on.

If possible, having it under high pressure would be the best but, given that there’s no high pressure cooker I’ll have to give up on that.

Taking it out soft and fluffy, I spread the butter and serve it up.

“Please”

“O-oh.

How strange. Your potato smells so many times better than that steamed potato.”

“Then you’ll understand once you eat it”

Gann-san took a bite at the Butter Potato then smiled.

“I see. With such a plan, even the potato becomes delicious.”

“If there’s oil, then I’ll cook up something even more interesting and delicious.

Something to go with alcohol. However don’t drink too much”

At those words, Gann-san’s face was plastered with surprise.

“Over Drinking of alcohol. I can smell it all the way over here.

Always yellow-faced, and sluggish. Stamina such that climbing up and down the stairs leaves you heaving for breath.

All of these are symptoms of over drinking. Sooner or later vomiting of blood or numbness of your limbs will occur.

It’s impossible to just quit drinking. However, you can plug it with a substitution to fool the desires, which can manage somewhat so that you won’t drink alcohol. All of what I said just now were initial symptoms.

If you gain control of it now, I shall promise that you will live a long life”

Gann-san is most likely on the verge of getting alcohol poisoning.

However, if he controls his alcohol so that it’s prohibited from here on, there’s a chance that he can manage somehow.

However since there is no doctor I can confirm for sure.

“….You, what are you”

“Just a simple cook. It’s just that through cooking I know of the body”

Which is a lie, it’s just that I saw something about it on a special television program back on Earth.

However Gann-san who didn’t know such a thing was completely surprised.

“Got it. It’s fine if I control the amount I drink yea”

“Previously, did you have something bad happen?

No, it might be over my boundaries but, it’s because that using alcohol to run away is quite a tough ordeal.

Or maybe you like alcohol too much.

But no matter how I see it, Gann-san, you don’t seem to enjoy it much”

“….Some family matters. There’s quite a lot. Anymore more than this….”

“Yes, you can stop there. I’ve only met Gann-san for a week.

I too am aware that there are matters which can’t be said”

“…Apologies”

Gann-san says and bitterly smiles.

It seemed like he was in pain, carrying a darkness from somewhere.

Image from The Food Network)

Chapter 26 - Promise and Potato Chips

The magic of snacks is strong.

The allure of Junk food is amazing and even if you understand how chips taste like, you end up addicted just eating it.

Someone who can win against that allure doesn't exist.

Nonexistent, I say!

From the glooms of the jail, Shuri wishes to send his regards.

The darkness Gann-san carries. I wonder what that is.

Truthfully speaking, seeing that I've received his favour up to now, I think I want to do something for him but….

I heavily acknowledge that for someone I know to this degree, there are matters which I can force myself into and there are matters which can not.

That's why, right now we are just friendly.

However, above all I pray that I can hear about how Ganglabe-san and the others are.

"Oi, you said something about cooking something delicious right?"

Towards someone like me, Gann-san went and brought the oil and potatoes.

This man, is he even interested in doing his job?

"Can you make it with this?"

The ingredients have been gathered but…

"I said I can make it so I can"

"Then, make it"

“But, what happened? Why are you so energized all of a sudden?”

So yesterday’s, as well as telling me to cook today again, what a strange person.

After all I am a criminal you know? Even though I haven’t committed a single crime.

“You see. In order to eat your food, I’ve had to suppress my alcohol consumption.

Especially that clam made with alcohol. Even if I copy you I can’t make very well but, after eating that, I can’t be satisfied with ordinary alcohol.

As a result, I’m able to suppress my alcohol. Basically, your cooking is the most appropriate to fix up my body.

And besides it’s even fun. It’s fun to think what kind of different foods you’ll be cooking up this time.”

Ahh, he’s looking forward to my cooking so much, this is more blessing than a cook deserves.

“What, you seem happy”

“Of course I’ll be happy if you say something like that to me.

A dish to respond to your expectations… no, I’ll make a side dish”

“Side dish?”

“This time it’s a simple dish which you can eat at a food stand.

I can make it with salt, oil and potatoes”

Now then, let’s make it.

The alluring junk food, Potato Chips!

The procedure is simple.

First, cut the potatoes into very thin slices.

It’s no good if it’s too thick. Nor if it’s scattered. In accordance with the flames, it’s ideal to rotate it uniformly in the oil’s heat.

It would be simple to use a large slicer and cut it quickly but jail isn’t a place

where such convenience is. I mean, since Gann-san brings food here it's no different from normal? Rather than that, this is another world right….

Now then, after the oil has heated up, I throw in the thinly cut potato slices.

After it raises….

"Excuse me, do you have something like a wire mesh?"

"Wire mesh?"

"No, a tool to drain the oil…."

"I think I had something like that so I brought this"

What Gann-san brought out was a wire mesh to grill fish with.

"Why something like this?"

"No well, I totally thought that the potato would be a delicious grilled dish"

"Well, it's just right"

Raising the floating potato chips onto the mesh, the oil drops down.

I only realise the usefulness of paper towels at a time like this.

"It's finished. After you can complete it by sprinkling salt"

"Eh? Just this?"

"Please try some"

Gann-san reluctantly picked one up and ate it.

"….Oh~, it's pretty good"

"Right?"

"Ouu, it's good"

While he says that, he can't stop moving his hands.

"….Oi"

"What is it?"

"This, I can't stop eating.

It's salty and crispy. Even though that's all it is, why can't I stop eating?!"

Kukuku, this! This is the magic of junk food!

“It’s delicious right?”

“Ahh, savouring it well, the taste of the appetizing potato and salt is just right.

Furthermore no matter if I chew it or eat it, there’s an aftertaste. Even after the taste remains, you want to eat more. Doing so, the leftover aftertaste becomes more appealing and you eat it again.

What a thing to eat! It’s probably delicious because it’s fresh but, this is amazing!”

Ain’t that right.

“This is delicious even when it’s cold”

“Ha?”

“Like I said, selling it freshly cooked at a food stand or, making large amounts of it, then filling them in bags to sell.

There are various ways to do this”

“Seriously?”

“And then, you can spread some cheese or lay some seaweed on it, the variations are plentiful”

Gann-san was so shocked he’s stiffening up but, this is normal in Japan.

Like Pizza Chips *etc.* That’s really tasty.

“I can’t believe it, you know such a sales method that by using one potato you can become a billionaire….”

“It’s not that exaggerated!”

As if you can become a billionaire with just this!

“Well let’s eat for now?”

“Let’s. But I seriously can’t stop eating this”

“Right”

Two of them crispy. Holding it crispy.

After that, they ate until there were no more potatoes.

Incidentally, there was no way he was going to give birth to another Riru-san (Junkie) so he made him eat in moderation.

Chapter 27 - Truth and Potato-mochi (Part 1)

Characteristic of the masses. Limited to the Region.

It seems that there is no one who can't sense the fascinations behind these words.

Even I, in order to eat Miso Ramen in Hokkaido, have been to Susukino.

After I ate the Miso Ramen I went into a Bird Tavern (Tori Izakaya) for a drink, it seemed to have become quite a vigorous trauma. But the Tsukune was delicious.

(TL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsukune was tempted to just call it skewers) The nice guy living underground, it's Shuri.

Recently, Gann-san hasn't been coming so it's boring.

At least food is being delivered so I'm not starving to death but, it's boring.

So boring.

It's important so I said it twice.

"What happened to Gann-san?"

"That guy is busy. Eat and behave criminal"

Eeeeehhh?

This Food Guard-san is terribly blunt and has such a sharp tongue.

He's not looking over here and has on a sour expression. It doesn't seem we'll get along….

I was sad so I started on the food.

A steamed potato and soup made from vegetable scraps….

Let's arrange this a little.

I drink up the vegetable scraps soup and pick up the steamed potato.

I take out the potato starch.

It was given to me secretly by Gann-san.

Mixing the potato with the potato starch, I heat up the portable stove and fry it in the pot.

That’s all it is.

This potato rice cake, aka Potato-mochi is similar to a sweet which you can eat in Hokkaido.

A texture of puffiness and springiness with the sweetness of sweet potato. This is an irresistible dish.

If possible it’s best eaten with soy sauce or miso paste but, since there isn’t any I wipe the remains of the soup and take a big bite into it.

Hmm, as expected it’s missing something.

“Oh, you’re eating”

As I was thinking that, Gann-san came along.

Like always, in his hands were alcohol snacks and fish sauce.

You, is your attitude towards work fine like that?

“….Something that looks good again”

“I have one. Want it?”

“Oh, can I take it?”

“If you add fish sauce to it, it tastes a lot better.

Therefore, please share some with me onegai”

“Are you actually kneeling?”

Of course. It’s dull if it’s just like this.

Gann-san got closer to me, and gave me the jar in which the fish sauce was contained.

“Is this fine? Lessee, what sort of thing is that?”

“It’s called Potato-mochi. It’s a snack you eat, made from making potato springy.”

“Potato again. Do you want to become the entire country’s provider for it as well?”

“Eh? At most it’ll be with potato dishes?”

What a cheap world… it seems if I spread around cup ramen I’ll become one of the multimillionaires on this continent.

Ah, I want to try making some instant preservative foods… I’ll try it next time.

“Oh, you probably can become one if it’s with a potato dish this good”

“Then, you popularise it please, Gann-san”

I, have no intention of leaving the corp.

Besides potatoes can grow anywhere (even in the wastelands) and because the amount you harvest is decent, if you popularise this then wouldn’t famines disappear?

As I was thinking that, Gann-san, grabs hold of the cell’s iron bars and fixates on me.

Scary?!

“Are you seriously saying that!?”

“Yes. After I’m free I’ll teach you. Potato cooking or cooking edible plants.

Since it’s pretty rare to have someone cook together with me, isn’t it fine because it seems fun?”

Besides if I cook by myself, since the Hamburg Junkie will secretly change the menu, there is a need for a guard.

The consumption for the beef is staggering, it’s troubling.

“You, do you understand just how much this is worth?”

“How much it’s worth…. It’s delicious, brings forth conversation, and fills stomachs. Isn’t that what cooking is about?”

It’s true that places like restaurants have a part of them which prioritises profit as well so, I understand that it’s just my ideals.

But, a person who opens a shop thinking from the start “Let’s profit! Become

rich!” probably doesn’t exist right?

Isn’t it more like “I want lot’s of customers to come in and eat, and tell me it’s delicious!”.

“….You, that’s the sort of person you are”

“I don’t really get what you mean but….

I am myself”

“I get it. It’s fine”

Saying so, Gann-san calms down and let’s go of the iron bars.

Then puts the Potato-mochi in his mouth as if he was annoyed.

“Damn it. Why do I have to watch over this kinda careless guy.

And why did I hand over a knife to this guy like it was normal. It’s like I’m helping him break out.

But he doesn’t break out. Such a totally careless and idiotic guy.

However his meals are good….

This potato thing has its unique softness and a mysterious springiness.

It’s doesn’t have the dryness of potato and it crumbles and melts in your mouth.

And if you add fish sauce, it tastes even better.

The saltiness and tastiness is just right.”

“Sorry but, I only have that one.

There’s not enough”

“I’ll go and bring more! Make as much as you want!

Kaa~, I’m becoming senileee.

Why, why did you knock down the lord’s wine glass and get arrested”

“It’s simple”

Well, it’s obvious if you see that.

“Because if he had drank it like that, most likely the feudal lord would’ve collapsed and died”

At those words, Gann-san’s gaze sharpened at once.

Super scary!

“What do you mean?”

Low, so low, his vocal tone is so low.

Hiii, why is this person so angry?

“Don’t curl up so frightened. Tell me. Would the lord have died if he had drank that wine?”

“Y-yes, it might not be as serious as death though….”

“What? Are you able to distinguish the poison which was put into the wine?”

“N-no, it’s not the wine. It’s the glass”

“Glass? Impossible, to coat that in poison?!”

“Hiii. N-no. It’s not poison.

Even if you use the same trick, it would only work on the feudal lord…”

“What did you say? Then, a magic engineered poison which is only effective to the lord?”

“I-it’s not such an exaggerated thing”

I said nervously.

“I mean, the feudal lord is allergic to metals right?”

At those words, Gann-san stiffened up with a crack.

“Aller…. what?”

“Allergic. If he touches metal objects with his skin, it’ll become a rash. His skin becomes red, hot, and his whole body itches”

“Ha, sounds stupid”

Gann-san folds his arms and said.

“The lord has advanced in the battlefield wielding his sword before. If by

holding an iron sword he becomes itchy, wouldn't that be a story"

"Yes, looking at it, it doesn't seem to be too terrible of an allergy but…"

"Besides, I've never heard of some terrible disease which arises just by wearing metal armour."

"It's a physical constitution problem. In addition even for metal armours, there are metals which lessen the allergic reaction."

"Ha?"

"Gold or silver… those are metals the allergy won't react to strongly"

"Wait wait. The fallen wine glass is made of silver. If what you're saying is true then, with that there shouldn't be any allergy or whatever"

"Which is why"

I said as I recall that scene.

"The insides of the handle, the plating was polished with iron."

I wouldn't have understood if I didn't see it carefully.

'The feudal lord's hands are sorta red', I had mysteriously thought.

And then, the handle wasn't silver but iron.

The insides were also polished with iron.

Unlike the modern Japan where it's refined with machinery, this world which relies on the intuition of magic engineering, has no technique to remove the materials responsible for allergies, and even the techniques to mix different metals into alloys are scarce.

If the mulled wine was poured and drunk just like that, it would be terrible.

The reason for metal allergies is that the metal ions are liquidated from the metal and it comes into contact with the skin.

The worst is nickel and such, the others I can't remember.

Nickel can be removed without a worry but, I've seen the damage it does. There was a person who got an inflammation from a nickel necklace. As long as it's not metal cups manufactured in the modern times, I can't get rid of the

unease.

If it touches your mucous membranes, then you'll get mucous membrane inflammation. If it gets in your bloodstream then you'll get full body dermatitis.

If it comes to that then it's terrible. Your body will hurt, heat up and be in agony.

Basically, the metal ions inside of the glass which had mulled wine poured in will begin to dissolve.

Drinking that will lead to the inflammation of the throat and esophagus.

It's dangerous even if it gets into the liver or intestines.

And by digesting it, it gets into your entire body's bloodstream and that's three strikes.

You won't be able to do anything anymore.

"B-but, if what you said is true, the symptoms should've come up much earlier.

That, he's been using it for a week already"

"That's why it's vicious.

As long as your body constitution doesn't change, the allergy won't improve.

On the contrary, the metal ions which have entered the body causes the body's immunity system to overreact, and it slowly deteriorates over time.

And then someday, the allergy symptoms will show up and he'll suddenly collapse"

If you ask me how I know so much, it's because my father was like that.

His tooth chipped, and metal was added in as a dental treatment.

And then suddenly one day, his whole body started itching.

Sending him into the emergency room, it didn't become a big thing but it seems that after that, at the dental clinic they removed the metal and replaced it with something else. This time it would be something that doesn't cause a reaction. It was a flashy gold.

After listening to my explanation of general knowledge, Gann-san was in a

panic.

“Impossible… that it was such a close call”

“Well, it’s fine as long as he doesn’t use that glass again.

The person who gave it to him wouldn’t have known of such a thing right?”

“… I can’t make a judgement myself.

Someone I can talk to, I’m going to go and talk this out with someone I can trust”

“Ah, is that so…”

Even just using one wine glass needed a meeting?

“Never, tell anyone else about this. Alright?”

“Eh? Yes”

I don’t really understand it but, he ended up giving me a warning.

Well, even if I told someone else, they probably wouldn’t believe me anyway.

Because I too, had only brought out my vague knowledge and memories of that time.

However, when I knew that this problem was way bigger than I had thought.

Was the next day.

Chapter 28 - Truth and Potato-mochi (Part 2)

(Author's note: You've waited for this! I feel as I update)

Since I've been born, I have been obligated to live by "out of sight".

I can never stand out. Days of being forced to do the dirty work behind the scenes.

Investigating the secrets of the chief vassal who works dishonestly.

An intelligence network at every place, establishing an espionage network.

Learning assassination techniques and detective techniques.

My everyday is completely doused in darkness.

My name is Gann Rubber.

Here, in the territory of Sounity I am the Head of Espionage in charge of the so called "Behind the scenes" work.

My name actually does not exist in the registry of the castle.

It's not written in the logs for either soldier or office worker.

Even the name Gann Rubber is not my real name, just what I call myself because it is necessary.

Having my future decided ever since I was born, burying myself in the mud of the name, Darkness.

Getting dirtier, and dirtier…. For the sake of protecting what I ought to, I did nothing but continued to fight.

However someone like me, recently got something fun.

The job this time is on the orders of the second prince.

Monitoring the arrested man in the jail.

Originally offending the feudal lord and such would end with him getting beheaded.

However, the second prince, Gingus Sounity was being cautious.

Gingus-sama was afraid that Shuri who seemed to know something might slip something.

What that is, even I didn't know.

"Gingus-sama. What is the information that guy holds?

If I don't know that then, it can't be helped even I am unable to deal with this"

"Shut up!"

Inside Gingus-sama's room, I received his scolding.

This year Gingus-sama is 15. And if he improves his achievements, he can proudly become a candidate as successor of the feudal lord.

However, Gingus-sama is not skilled with the management of the territory.

He certainly has the talent for military services but, it is not shared with his talents for domestic affairs and diplomacy.

It's because he understands this that he's impatient, and it's come to this.

"If that fucking cook knows of the information that only I know, kill him.

I too will do what I can, and propose to father and brother that he get the death penalty for his crime of dishonour. If it's me, with my actual military strength, then even those two can't ignore it."

"Then is it alright to kill him behind the scenes"

"That won't do. Even if we make him die a suspicious death in the jail, Ganglabe's mercenary corp will rush over here and turn this territory into a mountain of wreckage, I can see it already."

Gingus-sama gnaws at his nails, holding down his irritation.

"I will succeed in father's remains and include Ganglabe's Mercenary Corps who have been given land as part of my army, making them my pet dogs.

That is my plan. Despite that, that cook had to do something fucking worthless!! Every single one of you are in my way"

"Gingus-sama. Please calm down.

From here on I shall stay next to that cook as a jailor.

If anything happens, I shall report to you immediately”

“I’m counting on you Gann Rubber. Damn it, I have to revise my plan….”

I thought as I watched Gingus-sama continuing to gnaw at his nails and curse.

This person, is pitiful.

Even if he has a natural talent for war, without obstacles, without excellent subordinates who can prepare for military expenses, without elite troops, this territory cannot make use of this person’s talents.

Naturally, Gingus-sama, for the sake of changing the present situation is desperately giving it his best. Training soldiers, concentrating on nurturing his subordinates, spending his time acquiring the arts of war.

If it was a normal general then, he would be a wonderful talent capable of splendidly operating the army.

However, this person is taking over the lineage of a feudal lord. With just those talents, it’s not enough. The management of the land, diplomacy with the surrounding countries, from the management of taxes to its monitoring, and confirmation. The deployment of work. From the levying of taxes to the management of the tax rate, the management of the economics.

There are a mountain of things that he must do but, all this person can do to the bitter end is related to the army. When it comes to the management of the supply lines to constructing stratagems, he is the most outstanding in the family history of the feudal lords who sit in their territory. If he was born differently, he would most definitely be flourishing as a magnificent general.

His talents… aren’t enough. Even though it was just that, to this person, it was a fatal wound.

After exiting the room, I let out a sigh and headed towards the basement.

My target’s name is Shuri Azuma.

A talented man who treated the Feudal Lord to a wonderful whole roasted pig.

Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corps, Cook.

Right now, Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp was waiting for orders on the streets.

The commanders were in their own inn while the other troops scattered and were cramped in the various inns around the street.

Here, in the Sounity territory, outside the castle was the castle town.

A fairly large town which at the moment functions as a large prison for Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp.

Ganglabe, right now shouldn't be able to stir his troops.

He should be receiving a territory but, because of the actions of Shuri Azuma, that position was lost in one go.

As it could an intention for rebellion, they are not allowed to move until the investigations are over. They were suppressed by Gingus-sama's orders.

If it's a rebellion, they won't be receiving a territory. Additionally, we have the advantage as we are more familiar with the geography of the streets.

Also they shouldn't be able to move at a moment's notice.

However, it's not certain.

Their bond is many times thicker than we had imagined.

All of them being orphans to raising an army, they who managed to come to this point.

Taking caution as a precaution, it's definitely not a waste of time.

Ganglabe's tactics are far above Gingus-sama. That resourcefulness and trickery, and that genius-like sword handling is a threat.

Ahrius's magic can create flames which can even melt walls. In front of her, defenses have no meaning.

Riru's inventions can turn around war situations. A nightmare is where you cannot even yield expectations.

Cougar's existence, can scare off soldiers with just his swordsmanship, not allowing them to even display their power. Only he, is qualified to be called the Sword Demon.

Teg's scouting and archery techniques cannot be underestimated either. Just thinking about how from such a far off distance, when that arrow can pierce

through your throat is dreadful.

And then, the existence which made their bonds even stronger.

Shuri Azuma.

If there's any mistake in dealing with him, these streets will becomes mountains of rubble just like Gingus-sama says.

However, I don't understand the man known as Shuri Azuma.

Even after an investigation, there is absolutely no records or information of him before joining the mercenary corps.

I had bragged that there was no information which wouldn't get caught in my investigation and espionage networks.

However the result was a crushing defeat. No matter how I investigate I don't understand.

It's full of mysteries.

Where did Shuri Azuma come from?

Where did he acquire those cooking techniques?

I decided to investigate even that.

Should we ignore the existence of Shuri Azuma, there's no doubt that it's possible, that not just this territory, but the entire continent of Sabreau will invoke huge waves of troubles.

That's what my instinct tells me.

Now then, it's fine to actually just work as a jailor but, looking at my target, I become troubled.

No matter how I see it, I can't see him being such a threat.

Monitoring such a person, can I really search for the so called information that Gingus-sama did not want to leak out?

Taking out the alcohol, salted and dried clams I brought in, I decided to take a little break.

I decided to casually set up my chair in front of the cell.

“Ahhh, uughh, what should I do, if I prepare an excuse, no, but if I do a bad job they might kill me, but, ahhh-”

“Shut up criminal, be quiet inside the jail.”

“Yes, sorry!”

At one of my warnings, Shuri Azuma ended up shutting up. And even sitting in seiza.

Damn, did I say too much?

If possible I want to seize the initiative and get him to spit out what he has to and end this.

However if I rush things, he’ll realise what I’m doing.

“Geez, I can’t even drink in peace….”

Drinking the alcohol, I get a little distracted.

Turning my head around makes it better. But, as soon as the alcohol runs out I end up irritated again.

Which is why, if I had a break I decide to drink alcohol to clear up my head.

“Excuse me, is it alright for Jailor-san to drink alcohol?”

“Aahh!?”

This bastard had to hit where it hurts.

Obviously, there’s no way I’m allowed to drink.

“It’s nothing, I’m sorry!”

I wanted to let out a sigh looking at Shuri Azuma who spoke in fear.

Why is there a need for this sort of person to be in jail. It’s not like this guy can run away even if we throw him in the waiting room. He doesn’t seem to have any military strength and he doesn’t look very smart.

Which is probably why he asked. Wondering if I could stop his jailbreak in my drunken condition or not.

Looking down on me.

“….No matter what a feeble man like yourself does, you wouldn’t be able to defeat me.

Besides, those iron bars will definitely not break. It’s fine even without a jailor”

Those iron bars are engraved with Magic Reflection Magi Spells and the iron itself was specially made by the territory’s finest blacksmith.

There is no one who can break these and escape.

And even if there is, they are definitely monsters or things which we can never defeat.

That’s why, I too am able to gather my nerves to observe this guy without worrying about a jailbreak.

Casually setting up here, I’ll slowly suck up the information.

That’s what I had thought.

“The thing you’re taking out of your bag, what is it?”

Shuri Azuma inquired suddenly.

Somehow it seems he is interested in what I’m eating.

As expected of a cook, he has sharp eyes.

“Ah? Clams, you know, clams. Draining it off just like this, it’s a snack you eat while drinking alcohol.

You eat it with this fish sauce.

There’s none for you”

I don’t plan on giving any to him.

The alcohol won’t pass if I don’t have these. If the alcohol doesn’t go through then my head won’t spin.

If that happens, that’s the end of me.

“The alcohol you’re drinking, is it wine?”

“Rice wine. Just be quiet already”

It’s one the alcohols which have been circulated here from Newbyst recently.

The dry taste has been tightly sealed in, it’s a wine which goes down extremely smoothly.

With it being so good going down the throat, this wine is one I’m into recently.

A wine which also has a different complexion if it’s warm or cold.

I believe that this is the best of all wines.

But what he said blew away all of my expectations.

“Excuse me, I have a request”

“Rejected”

“That, won’t you share some with me?

I can make a delicious alcoholic snack with clams and sake”

This guy, what did he say?

Did he say he’ll cook here?

No, rather than that…

“With this?”

A dish with wine and clams?

There are indeed techniques to add flavour to dishes with wine or so I have heard with the passing of the wind.

But with rice wine? Cooking with this transparent wine and clams?

“Yes. Then if we have a pot, and fish sauce, it will perfect”

Does he really intend to cook here!

After Shuri Azuma takes out a piece of paper from his break pocket, it expands inside the cell and he started to prepare.

That paper, was it not confiscated?

If I recall in the reports, Shuri Azuma uses a mysterious paper to bring forth fire and cooks.

In this jail which is built upon by laying stone, there are no flammable objects and as long as I’m on guard there is no chance he can escape.

Thus doing so, what is his purpose?

No, it's just right.

If he plans to add poison then I can judge that they had the intent of rebelling against the Feudal Lord.

If that happens then I can cut off this man's arm, executing him, imprison Ganglabe under legitimate reasons, and might even be able to take in the mercenary corp.

With my sacrifice, I can drive a wedge into the mercenary corp, and if they're bounded by chains then it's a simple transaction.

"….Try it. It'll be good for killing time"

"Understood"

I hand over the basic cookware and Shuri Azuma began to cook excitedly.

This guy, did he really just want to cook?

Even though I've given him a knife, he's not doing anything?

I had planned to realise this guy's intent to rebel, advantage of that and torture him but, what a mood breaker.

When he had completed the basic preparations, the wine, clams and fish sauce were born again into one new dish.

Although I've seen the cooking process and it's very puzzling, it didn't seem at all like he had added any poison. Seriously, he only cooked up a dish.

Could it be, that I can not completely analyze a person like him?

That kind of thought suddenly popped into my head. This guy, as one of the important figures in the mercenary corp, should definitely be someone we need to pay close attention to.

Definitely…. even though that should be the case…..

What is it? Could it be that the smell and the sight of the food in front of me is just so wonderful that my head has stopped working?

The smell of the alcohol and the fish sauce were in perfect harmony, tickling

your nostrils.

The flesh of the clams looked dull but, being dyed with a slight brown, it's clear that flavour has been seeped in.

A dish which urges my sense of sight, even sense of smell, to EAT!!!

If I wasn't holding back with my reason, there's no doubt I would be biting at it right now.

"Try some"

"Oh, it smells good"

I see, this is his skill in cooking.

Seemingly more delicious than anything I've ever tasted, and yet it wouldn't be strange at all as something common folk can eat.

A simple but, brilliant dish that integrates skill and craft.

That's the impression this dish embraces.

Anyhow, for someone like me who can't be without drinking, I forgot the alcohol and couldn't take my eyes off the dish in front of me.

One bite, I pick it up and eat it.

Wonderful.

No other words could come out.

The flavour of the fish sauce was properly there. And the taste of the alcohol livened up the dish.

In the dryness, the rice wine had a refreshing taste.

Just that, is enough to represent all the flavour.

Then, impatience, a feeling like I could not wait.

Even though it somehow represented it all, that was just a revived phantom sensation caused by the flavour. The sensation, becoming desperate like the taste of eating air.

However, settling this is the combination of flavours from the clam and fish sauce.

It wouldn’t make you badly drunk like alcohol either. However, a satisfying feeling like eating wine.

And yet this clam dish was like a polished rare jewel.

Even the dry and salted ones, were becoming better.

Anyhow those salty ones, being heated together with the alcohol brought out a good feeling, and compared to those dried ones, a thicker flavour was oozing out.

As cooking it was perfection from combining, calculating, and withdrawing all of them.

“It tastes alcoholic but it isn’t as strong as sake. The fish sauce also leaves a good impression.”

It’s a lie. It isn’t a dish which can be described with these words.

The truth would be like a minstrel spinning a tale of heroes, to describe this dish, and even piling up mountains of bundles of paper wouldn’t be enough.

This is, the cook of Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp, the skill of Shuri Azuma huh.

If it’s poison, it was indeed there.

A poison called ecstasy.

Most likely, even Ganglabe was done in by this poison, then spreading to the other members, thus coming to win large numbers of wars whilst infected by this poison.

Making such a thing, is this ordinary looking man.

“You, you’re a pretty interesting guy”

“Is that so”

He is definitely an interesting guy.

That guy, seemingly looking embarrassed as he picks up a clam, I can’t think of him holding any decisive information which could lead to the downfall of Gingus-sama.

“Ah. Normal criminals wouldn’t do something like cooking”

“There’s also probably no Jailor-san who would hand over ingredients to such a criminal so they could cook either”

Casually joking at me.

Somehow I’m filled with a desire to laugh.

“No doubt about it”

I feel like it’s a been awhile since I’ve laughed.

Eating food, talking to someone and laughing.

Such a natural thing, making someone like me experience a person’s daily life.

It’s strangely happy.

Strange yet amusing.

“It seems that I won’t be bored anymore”

To me, who had despaired life and couldn’t have lived an idle life.

It seems that the gods have given me a wonderful present.

In the records, the me right now has become something like a jailor.

Considering that, the thing that that lazy jailor has been given.

It surprisingly feels like it has way too large of a value.

After that, within the territory, the two power struggles between the first prince, Ekress-sama and the second prince, Gingus-sama begins.

The topic being, the handling of Shuri Azuma.

The first prince, Ekress-sama is saying that it’s better to keep him alive.

The reason being, that the Feudal Lord-sama is exceedingly interested in that pigskin dish.

“No”, the words that Shuri Azuma said when knocking down the wine glass has always been stuck with Ekress-sama.

Perhaps, there might be some reason behind it.

Doing an investigation, Ekress-sama requested that, wouldn’t it be better to determine the underlying cause.

On the other hand, the second prince, Gingus-sama's says that it's better to kill him him. This I knew already so I wasn't surprised.

Except, even now I still don't know that information that Shuri Azuma supposedly holds.

"Have you still not been able to get the information out of him!"

That night, Gingus-sama calls me to his room and scolded me.

"Apologies. He is unexpectedly tight-lipped.

He will not let it slip easily"

"Fuck! If you don't hurry, then older brother and father might interrupt again!"

Gingus-sama get annoyed and started biting his nails.

No matter how many times I warn him, he won't fix that habit. That's why his fingertips are worn-out.

I bow and planned to exit.

"Wait"

Behind my back, Gingus-sama called.

Turning around, Gingus-sama seems puzzled.

"What is it?"

"You, have you become healthier lately?"

? I don't understand the intent behind Gingus-sama's question.

"Now, what do you mean?

I am always watchful of my own health condition, carrying out my duties with the very best."

"No, you've clearly become healthier.

You cannot fool my eyes. Your complexion is well, and you're brimming with energy.

Have you stopped drinking?"

!?

“…. What could you possible mean?”

“Don’t lie. As a general I even monitor all my subordinate’s physical conditions. With just a glance, I understand if they’re healthy or not.

I even know that you’ve been depending on drinking in the shadows.

Despite that, you’re body is perfect. It isn’t comparable to before.”

…. I, happen to know why.

But, if I say that, I might be judged here.

“Indeed, I have stopped drinking.

Because of my bad body condition, it wasn’t time to drink alcohol, I became like this before I knew it after I banned alcohol.”

“I see. However, becoming so healthy is…

As expected, the reason is alcohol. Be careful, Gann Rubber”

“It is as you say”

I bow and left, recalling what happened recently as I walk down the hallway.

Indeed I have stopped drinking alcohol heavily.

Thus mending my body’s condition, and my head can operate without relying on alcohol like before.

This is, most likely due to Shuri’s cooking.

The sake clams he made. Trying to copy that, most of them didn’t turn out very well but there was no need to drink alcohol.

After all it’s a food which uses alcohol. It goes well with alcohol but, even then I don’t over drink.

It was at that time. That he raised those words at me.

A few days later, I go to his place and he creates a masterpiece with a potato.

A simple dish using just potato and butter.

However, the deliciousness was nothing less than shocking.

The soft and flakiness of the potato, and the thickness of the butter.

And the slight sweetness of the butter makes it irresistible.

This goes well with the alcohol.

However, he said looking at me.

“If there’s oil, then I’ll cook up something even more interesting and delicious.

Something to go with the alcohol. Yet something that won’t make you drink too much”

I was so surprised my heart jumped.

I’m controlling my alcohol intake and he has indeed seen me drink but, he goes far and above my expectations.

“Over Drinking of alcohol. I can smell it all the way over here.

Always yellow-faced, and sluggish. So little stamina such that even climbing up and down the stairs leaves you heaving for a breath.

All of these are symptoms of over drinking. Sooner or later your limbs will numb and you’ll be vomiting of blood.

It’s impossible to just quit drinking. However, you can plug it with a substitution to fool your desires, which can make it so that you won’t drink as much alcohol. All of what I said just now were initial symptoms.

If you gain control of it now, I shall promise that you will live a long life”

He, Shuri, by looking at my face, made a precise diagnoses, and then even ended up correctly guessing my future symptoms.

Indeed, the symptoms he’s described have begun.

My complexion before Gingus-sama said that it’s gotten better, was indeed like that.

There were also times when I would get tired for no reason.

Even that for some reason I would be short of breath on the stairs.

I had thought that it was because I didn’t have enough stamina but, saying that it’s all because of the over drinking of alcohol.

Am I, broken?

Saying that alcohol destroys the body, I never thought I would be on the verge of that.

Being able to see so much with just at most one week of meeting each other, to be honest, I'm completely surprised.

But, for the sake of living, I guess I'll have to do as he says.

After that day, I decreased the amount I drank even more.

After another few days passed, that guy made another masterpiece side dish with potatoes.

This time the potato was just sliced thinly, flavoured with salt, and deep-fried in oil.

Despite this I couldn't stop.

It was a simple dish. Even I, who has just seen this once, could imitate this.

I can make it, but.

Exactly because that it's such a simple side dish, rather than addictiveness, it's nothing less than an unstoppable astonishment.

Furthermore, there are even variations of that guy's potato slice fries.

And it's even delicious when it's cold.

Selling it in a food stand and the abundance of types.

Even if he were to put it on the market right now, there's no doubt he'll become a multimillionaire.

That's just how delicious this side dish is.

"I can't believe it, you know of a business that with just one potato can make you a multimillionaire…."

"It's not that exaggerated!"

There's no way it's an exaggeration.

The unit price of potatoes are cheap. That's why the commoners can easily get it and use it like it's their staple food.

Plus, potatoes can even be cultivated in the wastelands and you're able to harvest a lot of them.

Which is why in the rural villages, they grow potatoes for the sake of eating them during the winter.

Also speaking of the ways to eat potatoes, isn't there just two options, steaming them or putting them in soups?

There's no way they can take it out raw and of course none of them can change their way of thinking like this guy to deep fry them.

Shuri is laughing as if it's an exaggeration but, I've changed my evaluation of him.

If I think about it, this guy can survive on his own.

And even completely break down that country from their foundation, that territory's food culture, and build a new food culture on top of that.

It's like both the gods of destruction and construction live inside him.

If this guy is left unwatched, that's exactly what that country will end up being changed to from their foundations.

Food culture is a proof of human action that has been handed down long ago from that land and culture.

If we neglect this guy in a place like that, there's no doubt he can destroy everything. That's how good this guy's food tastes. And the commoners can make it easily.

And the country he makes after destroying everything, will probably look like something I've never seen before.

This guy, is dangerous.

However if I kill him, I will be crushing the start of a new history of food culture on this continent.

"Well let's eat for now?"

"Let's. But I seriously can't stop eating this"

"Right"

But, I can’t stop this so called Potato chips.

It’s good, this.

It seems like all my worries are blown away when I eat this.

But I can’t let them be blown away.

Thus, from the next day I drew up a report concerning Shuri.

I even received permissions from Gingus-sama, earnestly putting together the inquiries and hypothesis concerning the person, Shuri, all into one document.

“….He’s a strange person”

In that process, the impression that comes to mind was, as expected, he is a strange man.

While sitting by an environment called the mercenary corp, his kindness and honesty of worrying about the condition of a person of the castle who tossed him in jail.

In some respects, soft-hearted, and saying it differently, a gentle smile.

His cooking skill is top class. Furthermore he can create masterpieces with common ingredients.

And, he has no ambition.

With skills like that, he can even successfully start a restaurant.

Developing dishes using his application in the art of cooking, he’ll probably be popular even as a small store.

Maybe, it’s possible that he can work for royalty with the development of new foods.

Despite that, he is satisfied with being the cook of Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp.

It’s precisely because that he can only succeed that it’s strange.

Even though unlike me, he can seize glory on the face of the world.

“It’s no use even if I think about it huh”

I completed the basic report in one go.

Before I meet Gingus-sama, I guess I'll meet up with him one more time.

Somehow, it's fun to go see Shuri.

Because even just going to meet him, I can eat the best meals.

However, recently I haven't even been able to do that.

I had to organise the reports and I even had work.

Above all, they've started buying up all the food for the sake of the power struggle between Ekress-sama and Gingus-sama, causing the town near the castle to fall into a food shortage.

It's probably for the sake of that. Between the ingredients in the castle, and the food you can buy in town, there is a considerable difference.

Potatoes can be bought easily but, other things will usually not be lined up in the storefront, and such.

It's troublesome. If this power struggle or rivalry between the two factions continues any further then, it's possible that before long there will be an accident from the citizens.

I want to do something before that happens.

Going down underground, I could smell something good.

"That guy, he's made something again…."

Even though I was stunned, I smiled from enjoyment.

Let's see, I wonder what he made today?

"Oh, you're eating"

Like always, I come down preparing my alcohol side dishes and fish sauce and, Shuri was eating something yellow.

By the way, this time I didn't bring any alcohol. Alcohol, I'm sick of it.

The thing Shuri was eating, was a lump which seemed somewhat springy.

"….Something that looks good again"

When I have my chance I'll process the food myself and eat it.

I've never seen a prisoner who makes their jailor cry this much.

But, since that jailor is me, if I can get some I would be happy.

"I have one. Want it?"

"Oh, can I take it?"

"If you add fish sauce to it, it tastes a lot better.

Therefore, please share some with me onegai"

"Are you actually kneeling?"

I wonder if he's easily influence or all talk.

He's often like this, doing things that invite you to smile.

Even his kneeling this time, the movement flow was somewhat strange.

Ahh, as expected I'm smiling.

It's pretty rare, that I'm in such a good mood.

I took out the jar which had the fish sauce in it.

"Is this fine? Lessee, what sort of thing is that?"

"It's called Potato-mochi. It's a snack you eat, made from making potato springy."

"Potato again. Do you want to become the entire country's purveyor for it as well?"

"Eh? At most it'll be with potato dishes?"

This guy, seriously has no self-awareness.

"Oh, you probably can become one if it's with a potato dish this good"

"Then, you popularise it please, Gann-san"

I couldn't believe my ears. In the moment that I was withholding my jealousy, I wasn't able to understand what he had said.

Me? Popularise this dish?

This dish which is pretty much gushing up money to me?

Realising that, I remove the jealousy from my mouth and grasped the iron bars.

“Are you seriously saying that!?”

“Yes. After I’m free I’ll teach you. Potato cooking or cooking edible plants.

Since it’s pretty rare to have someone cook together with me, isn’t it fine because it seems fun?”

Not just potatoes but also edible plants?!

Edible wild plants are a necessary ingredient for getting over the winter. Depending if this was there or not, the harshness of the winter changes greatly.

However, the most you can do with wild plants is boil them and eat them. And it stinks of vegetables.

Maybe, maybe if this guy can make even wild plants taste good then.

It means that there’s a simple self-energising method of moving from village to village, and even journeys.

And not just that, you can become an indispensable figure to the village.

If he knows the method to cooking wild plants then, it’s possible that he might even know the way to prepare the wild plants and mushrooms that we’ve never eaten before.

That’s what this guy just carelessly said!

“You, do you understand just how much this is worth?”

“How much it’s worth…. It’s delicious, brings forth conversation, and fills stomachs. Isn’t that what cooking is about?”

It’s like my head’s been hit.

No, it’s not that. The attack assaulted me like, being rammed in the head by a battering ram.

Shuri’s words, were the truth.

As for food, ingredients, cooking, life.

All of those truths, were all expressed in just one phrase.

The person who said that, was looking unfazed.

However, that phrase was originally something that people like us, who have unified a territory had to know.

Protecting the citizens livelihood, their safety.

To the citizens who make meals, sitting together happily with their families, embracing the pride that what they're doing is not wrong.

Is there a phrase better than this?

No, there isn't.

And to him, that phrase is, just a normal act in a day, something obvious, ordinary and dull.

Something which ought to always be by your side.

Something, which the world ought to have.

Basically, no different from the pebble on the side of the street.

As obvious as wind blowing.

Something ordinary people around here ought to feel.

Something that exists as a repetition of an everyday act.

"….You, that's the sort of person you are"

Being able to say that natural happiness is a blessing.

Having no ambition, he is just an honest guy who can be glad for little fortunes.

Things like acting appropriate due to status and age is completely unrelated.

He can be thankful for the happiness which is there.

He's just a humane person.

"I don't really get what you mean but….

I am me"

And it's frustrating that the person himself has no self-awareness.

Even though I've finally realised this about him.

This guy has been doing this for a long time.

Which is why he can live aloof, and innocent.

“I get it. It’s fine”

It’s absurd to think about it.

Saying that this guy was planning to assassinate the Feudal Lord or, planning to offend him or that he’s polishing schemes and stratagems. There’s probably no way that any of that is true.

I let go of the iron bars.

And then I add fish sauce to the Potato-mochi I took, and stuffed it in my mouth.

Ahh, delicious.

It’s just nothing but delicious.

The texture is fresh as well. It’s fun to chew at its springiness.

“Damn it. Why do I have to watch over this kinda careless guy.

And why did I hand over a knife to this guy like it was normal. It’s like I’m helping him break out.

And yet he doesn’t break out. Such a totally carefree and idiotic guy.

However his food is good….

This potato thing has its unique softness and a mysterious springiness.

It doesn’t have the dryness of potato and crumbles and melts in your mouth.

And if you add fish sauce, it tastes even better.

The saltiness and tastiness being just right.”

“Sorry but, I only have the one.

There’s not enough”

“I’ll go and bring more! Make as much as you want!

Kaa~, I’m becoming senileee.

Why, why did you knock down the lord’s wine glass and get arrested”

“It’s simple”

I will probably never forget the words that came after.

Because, he said it so nonchalantly.

“Because if he had drank it like that, most likely the feudal lord would’ve collapsed and died”

The moment I heard that, I was frightened.

The Feudal Lord? Almost dead?

I interrogate about that to Shuri and he tells me in panic.

That the Feudal lord is afflicted with some strange disease.

That strange disease, it becomes worse every time it comes back, if it happens again.

Saying that the Feudal Lord’s body will definitely break down, if it goes on like this.

Towards all those facts, I was confused even as I was listening.

It’s true that, ever since the Feudal Lord started using that wine glass his body condition has been getting worse.

After he used the wineglass he scratches his hand because it’s itchy and even coughs.

If I recall, I think that those are probably the sign of the symptoms of the allergy that guy spoke of.

And then those symptoms, were actually symptoms which the Feudal Lord had been worrying about for many years.

Years ago, when he was using an iron sword, it seemed like that once he’s tired, the itching would be unbearable.

However, after he rests for a moment the symptoms lessen and he becomes just like normal.

Which is why, the person himself as well as the people around him, thought that it was a physiological phenomenon which comes out when he’s tired.

I gave a strict order to Shuri that he is not to tell another soul about this, hurriedly returned to the office and began to rewrite the report. Dipping the feathered pen in ink, finalising the received information on a new piece of paper.

Perhaps, the information that Gingus-sama was afraid of was this.

This is just a guess but, I don't think that Gingus-sama would hurt the Feudal Lord, his father.

Except Gingus-sama was extremely flustered.

There isn't enough time to accumulate achievements for the sake of succeeding this land. Causing the Feudal Lord to be in bad shape, seems like he wholeheartedly wanted to establish his position as the heir by splendidly bringing together the territory and army in that time.

That is because he is scared of the existence of his older brother, Ekress-sama, as the heir of this territory snatching away his legacy.

Getting his officers which he has trained and nurtured himself snatched away, can only be a nightmare.

Which is why, I was also ordered to spy on Ekress-sama.

In addition this information.

Gingus-sama might not be able to avoid his abolition anymore.

Wanting to kill his own father, the Feudal Lord who unified this territory.

I carried the report I had written and headed to Gingus-sama's room.

Luckily, it was late and I didn't meet anyone.

Because I must avoid having this information leaked to others.

"Excuse me, Gingus-sama"

I stand in front of his room, and knock.

I enter since a voice immediately came from inside.

"What's wrong, Gann"

Gingus-sama was reading a strategy book in his room.

Despite it being so late, he is truly an enthusiastic person.

“I have written the reports. I apologize deeply for coming so late at night but, please confirm”

“Is it urgent?”

“Yes”

“Got it. Hand it over”

I give him the report and took a step back.

Scanning over that report, Gingus-sama looked at me.

“I see.

There’s no change with brother. However I can see that he is expanding his faction.

And the guy in the jail has still not said a thing till now, huh”

“Yes”

I handed over a fake report.

There, I didn’t write anything about the information Shuri confessed.

It was harmless and inoffensive, but I wrote enough information to satisfy Gingus-sama’s pride.

Except for the vital information, everything was true.

However I completely omitted the information which he was not allowed to know.

“Expanding his faction, huh.

Damn officials. Abandoning me and joining brother huh”

“Your commissioned officers are the same as always, pledging alliance to Gingus-sama.

However, there are also concerns that if we turn hostile to the officials, they may delay the payment of their wages.”

“Hmph, there’s no need to worry. That is why we have gathered up the food within the territory.

Tell them that.”

“Yes. And about the monitoring of Ekress-sama but, it seems that Ekress-sama has still not noticed our state of affairs”

“Got it. I will polish my plans. You can leave”

“As you wish”

Bowing, I exit the room and walk towards my other target.

The place that I’m heading to now, cannot be caught by anyone’s eyes. Carefully, but quickly heading over.

I stood in front of the room, check the surroundings and quickly enter.

“I apologize for coming so late”

“I don’t mind Gann. Because to me, the time I have with you is important”

The one there was, a young man sitting in the office applying approvals.

Glamourous silver hair tied behind his head into a ponytail, a beautiful young man who if you didn’t look at carefully may even mistake as a beautiful girl.

Short with a thin body, that was the young man, Ekress Sounity.

My real superior.

“And? Have you come because there is information or reports of worthy importance?”

“Yes. Please look at this”

I take out the real report I had hidden in my chest and present it.

Ekress-sama received it and pondered as he read the contents.

Although I was ordered by Gingus-sama to spy on Ekress-sama, Ekress-sama’s information was concealed in the report, while Gingus-sama’s information was reported to Ekress-sama without covering it up.

The so called double spy.

And then Ekress-sama made a complicated face.

“If this is true then, then it’s decided that Gingus has wanted to kill father.

This is something that cannot be joked about.”

“Yes. However, I don’t think that Gingus-sama was going to go as far as murder”

“Hmm. It’s true that father’s condition, no, I wonder if it’s this strange disease? Well, it hasn’t been something life threatening so far after all.

It’s just that he’s bad with metals since long ago. But after reading this report, I wonder if even I was in danger.

This person is amazing, Nii-san”

“…. Don’t call me your brother, Erkreniss. I am your subordinate to the bitter end”

“It’s because of you Nii-san, that I am Ekress. Erkreniss is my childhood name, now I am Ekress Sounity. The eldest son of the lord who governs this land”

We both laugh wryly, earning each other a brief moment of rest.

I was born as the eldest child of the Feudal Lord.

However, my mother is a maid. A commoner’s status. Father made a move on her for fun and the one born, was me.

The Feudal Lord acknowledges me but, doesn’t claim to be the father. I too, have not called that man, my father.

In the first place, I don’t acknowledge that man as my father.

Banishing my mother behind the scenes, a guy like that who only gave me the skills to live on in the dark side.

And then, completely renouncing my right to be heir whilst keeping my existence a secret.

Which is why, the only one who knows about my existence is the “Little sister” in front of me.

Ekress is also a pitiful existence.

She was born as the eldest daughter from the Feudal Lord’s concubine.

When she was young, I had supported her as a bodyguard.

What was unfortunate was my little sister's excellence.

Creating expectations for father by displaying her peerless talent in internal management and economics.

As a result, father, the Feudal Lord treated Ekress as a son, and decided to raise her as the heir.

Erkreniss died as a female. After that she existed as the heir, Ekress.

The one who opposed that was that witch of a legal wife.

The legal wife had birthed a son. That was our younger brother, Gingus.

Gingus had talents concerning war.

Nurturing him as a backup heir was the suggestion of the legal wife.

As a result it's become a fight between two factions, the first prince and the second prince.

For me, I'm happy as long as Ekress is happy.

To me, Ekress is the only one I can call family. Real family who'll be with you despite knowing everything and stay with you.

However, Ekress is also thinking of saving Gingus.

"Ekress. Gingus is…"

"Un, I know. I will punish him properly using this as an example.

And then, I will leave this territory. It'll be my last job."

Ekress, is thinking of leaving the inheritance to Gingus.

And she wishes to throw away her obligations.

That is something I wish to assist with.

"Perhaps he will fight with Ganglabe and the others"

"Probably. Before that I will persuade Gingus and deal with it properly. Since I'll be conceding the inheritance, ne.

Before that, I sure want to meet him"

Ekress smiles .

“That Shuri-kun”

“…If we go now, no one will be able to find out”

“Then, let’s do that”

Ekress stands up from her chair.

Shuri, I had planned to let you meet with Ekress-sama but.

It ended up being earlier than I had planned.

I pray, I pray that you’ll be able to save us.

Chapter 29 - Fate and Potato Galette (Part 1)

Fate.

That is the determined future. Destiny you cannot change.

Or something like that, I wanted to try to say something cool today, it's Shuri time.

After eating Potato-mochi I'm sleepy so I'll sleep.

Today is already over!

"Shuri, are you awake?"

As I think that and lie down, I could hear Gann-san's voice.

"Fuwaaa… what's wrong, at such a time.

No, I don't really know the time though"

I don't have a watch, nor the suns rays.

"There's someone I want you to meet"

"Can't it wait till tomorrow…?"

I want to sleep already so I turn over and sleep.

Good night!

"No, I want you to meet today"

"Who is it…?"

"The eldest son of the Feudal Lord who governs this area, Ekress-sama"

"Yes. You're welcome anytime!"

Oh damn, some big shot ended up coming YO!

"Then, Ekress-sama"

"Un, thank you Gann"

Being led by Gann-san, a man came in front of my cell.

…..

Who?

No, I get that it's the eldest son but….

It was a character of great beauty. It was an unbelievably beautiful woman.

But, it's somewhat strange.

This person, male? Female?

It's not that I can't tell him apart because he was too genderless-like but….

"Hahaha. Are you surprised. I am the one called Ekress Sounity.

Your name is?"

"Yessu yua hainessu! I am called Azuma Shuri!

Azuma is my surname and Shuri is my name!"

Oh noes, could it be I was rude being confused!

"Well then, is it alright to call you Shuri Azuma?"

"Yessu!"

"Well then Shuri-kun. I actually have something I want to discuss with you.

I wonder if you have time right now?"

"Naturally it exists"

Because if I refused here, it seems like my head would be severed.

However, Ekress-sama suddenly let out a giggle.

What's up so sudden?

"You're a pleasant person. It's rare that someone will make me laugh so much"

"I don't really understand but… could it be that I was rude….?"

If that's the case then, isn't my head going to be severed!?

"Ahh, it's alright. This time it's unofficial so I don't mind if you aren't so respectful"

"Cause if you were rude, I would have cut off your head"

Ehhh!? There's no way Gann-san!

“Now then Shuri-kun. I want to talk but. Is it alright?”

“Talk?”

“Ahh, it seems like you’ve cooked a lot for Gann right?”

“Eh?”

“You don’t have to hide it. I’ve even read the report. Thank you for caring about Gann’s physical condition”

Well… there was that matter but.

“I just, wanted to cook something delicious….”

“Fufu, you’re modest.

Now, here is the real discussion”

Ekress-sama’s expression turned serious immediately.

With an extremely cold atmosphere, like it would swallow me up.

Then, Gann-san, who was standing in the back, took out two ingredients.

Potato, and bacon, desu.

After handing that to me, he once again moved behind Ekress-sama.

A model servant!

“Right now, our territory is suffering from a serious food shortage. So much so that even I, the son of the feudal lord, think that just these two ingredients lined up on a table is luxurious.

Now, if it was you. How would you prepare these ingredients?”

Bacon and potatoes, huh?

It’s fine to just fry it normally over a pan but….

No, it’s likely that this person is not wishing for that.

“Do you have salt?”

“There are no seasonings this time”

Hmmm…. Cooking these ingredients without seasoning, huh.

“This bacon, has it already been flavoured?”

“No, it’s something that has been processed normally”

I see. Then let’s just simply make that.

If it’s this world which hasn’t developed refrigeration technology, there’s probably also a large amount of seasonings they can use.

“Then let’s make a Potato Galette.

There should be enough flavour.”

Bacon is amazing. Especially because that even without adding flavour to it, there’s enough flavour to be an alcoholic side dish.

Although, as expected I would prefer to have salt and pepper.

First I cut the potato into thin slices, frying it in the pot.

After it’s cooked well, I toss in the bacon.

Heating one side till it hardens, I flip it once I think that it’s cooked.

It’s complete after cooking the other side the same way. I serve it onto a plate and handed it over to Ekress-sama.

“It’s finished. Please enjoy the flavour of the bacon.”

“Thank you. However, I’ve never seen this dish before.

It’s almost looks like the potatoes were slightly extending out, as if they are burying the bacon inside it.”

Ekress-sama admires.

Receiving a knife and fork from Gann-san behind him, he started tearing it apart.

You, are going to always keep that up?

“….Hou”

A voice of admiration leaked out from Ekress-sama as he ate it.

“It’s wonderful. Indeed the flavour is properly there. It’s strange. Even though there shouldn’t be any other seasoning added at all.”

“That is the flavour of the bacon itself moving to the potato, combining with the sweetness of potato to become that taste”

Bacon is seasoned heavily during the manufacturing process. And even wine is used in the seasoning after the all that salt.

Cause bacon is just smoked meat which is then salted, ne.

Despite that, it has a strong flavour and is deliciously cured.

That is the wonderfulness of bacon.

“Un un, it’s certainly as you say. If you eat this bacon, which is also good preserved, for breakfast even if it’s just accompanying something else, the quality of the flavour jumps up.

However, in the end it’s just putting it with something else or frying it.

Doing it like this, burying the bacon in the potato as one dish is uncommon. The people in town, can easily mimic this”

Preserved foods?

Ahh, speaking of which, bacon used to be a preserved food. That was because, back then they used a large amount of salt. Modern Japan doesn’t do that. In the present where taste, appearance and a refrigeration environment is properly arranged, the salt levels are kept somewhat low because of the higher water amount.

Despite that, I definitely would not recommend keeping bacon at room temperature.

Sometimes, there’s bacon which is possible to be kept at room temperature as well but, that’s safe. Just that, it’s recommended to eat it sooner.

After Ekress-sama finished eating the entire Galette, he smiled like he was satisfied.

“Wonderful. Certainly, with this amount of skill in cooking, I too understand why Ganglabe-dono says he doesn’t want to let you go”

“How is Ganglabe-san doing?”

It’s something I’ve constantly worried about.

“Right now, they are being confined in the town outside the castle. Crammed in separate inns.”

“Then, they’re just fine”

I’m relieved~ So relieved.

That was my only concern….

“However, because the reason for your actions are unknown, they may be be subjected to punishment under the crime of disrespect”

“Ehhh”

That’s ridiculous. If I didn’t do that, and the Feudal Lord collapsed it would’ve been an even worse!

“I understand what you want to say. I received the report from Gann. However, right now a political strife is happening within the territory. If I don’t do something about that, I cannot even help you get out of here.”

And then Ekress-sama said as he casts his gaze downwards.

“In addition, if we continue to waste time like this, Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp might not stand it anymore and erupt. If it comes to that then most likely, I’ll be killed”

S-somehow, it seems that the situation is worse than I had thought.

Oh man~ I don’t wanna be involved in such a sticky fight!

“So, there’s a need for a discussion”

“?”

“Won’t you take me away to escape?”

“Eh, Ekress-sama?!”

Eh? What is this person saying all of a sudden?

See, even Gann-san who’s behind you looks surprised, you know?

I don’t get this situation~ YO!

“I thought about this. Whether it’s the problem this time, or the things until now. That if it ends up coming to me to unify this territory, I will become

“Twisted” somewhere.

Thus, I thought it would be fine if I was gone.

But I was anxious to do so. I mean, am I able to flee and go to the town to live?

That’s where you come in. If we have your skill in cooking, then with the support of Gann and I, we’ll be able to survive in the town with no problems.

Of course, I’ve thought through this problem as well with all my power. Once it’s over, I’ll give up the right to be heir and retire.

What do you think? Won’t you take me away from here”

Sudden. It’s too sudden.

But, I have no reason to refuse. If everyone from the corp is alright.

I’ll leave the rest to this person, so it’s fine for me to see just how things develop.

If this can resolve the problem then, there’s nothing more to add.

I nod and said.

“Understood. After we leave it seems you’ll become a cook alongside me under Ganglabe-san but, is that alright?”

“I don’t mind. As long as we can leave this place”

Ekress-sama says that and smiled.

That smile, where have I.

Being able to throw away everything that’s been forced upon him, a face of relief.

After that, Ekress-sama left following Gann-san.

“….Is that alright”

Is it alright to throw it away…

Everything you acquired, to throw that away….

No, because it’s unreasonable even if he stays.

Rather than that, it might be better to go forth a different road if there is one.

In the end, it’s the reason I slept with an indescribable anxiousness.

Chapter 30 - Fate and Potato Galette (Part 2)

I am always thinking.

Why I was born. What I should do.

What I want to do.

If I was born with a vastly different figure.

I wonder if I could be at ease without worrying like this.

I am Ekress Sounity.

My real name is a something else but, since I've already been Ekress for a long time, I can respond to it effortlessly .

I, who was born as the eldest daughter from the Feudal Lord of this territory, was raised as a girl when I was young. I think that, to this day, that was the time I was happiest.

I was a child who was good at reading, writing and calculations.

I was especially good with maths, and through doing mental calculations was able to point out the mistakes in the territory's paperwork when I looked at them.

Which was why although my private lessons and my etiquette lessons were certainly good, I did best in my maths lessons. I was able to perfectly perform the four basic rules of arithmetic by the age of seven. (TL: Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, also I could do that too :v sasuga asian parents) Thus Father who had his eye on me, made me do various things as a test. Paperwork, calculation of the territory's taxes, understanding the market economy *etc.*

The result. It was confirmed that I have talent for domestic management.

Even thinking back to it now, I think I did a stupid thing.

I think if at that time I had laid low a little bit, it wouldn't have come to this.

Wholeheartedly wanting to be praised, I ended up tackling everything that came my way seriously.

And then, Father decided to raise me as his successor.

That’s when my life as a woman ended.

What began was, the education and reform as a man. Stripped away everything seeming of a girl, that was the first prince, Ekress Sounity.

I became a machine doing nothing but the calculation work of the territory.

While I was doing my job, I learnt of the existence of my brother.

It was my attendant, Gann Rubber.

I learnt that he was my father’s illegitimate child and a brother born from a different mother.

How I realised it was just through something trivial. It was a certain day when I had strangely thought that Gann and I both have some similar features somewhere.

I had ended up hearing a conversation between Father and Gann.

He says, don’t force any further burden on my little sister.

He says, even now you should raise her as a girl.

When I had heard that, all my doubts melted away.

Ahh, I had an older brother, I thought.

That’s why we looked similar, I thought.

When I told Gann about that, he came to apologize.

But, I had no intention to blame him at all.

Rather, I said that I’m thankful that I had met a family member who understood me.

From that day, Gann and I started to work together.

Once the problems with the territory have calmed down, we can definitely escape from the current situation.

I believe that.

A certain day, a problem happened in the territory.

It was that, a cook from the key figure of this time’s war, Ganglabe’s

Mercenary Corp had disrespected towards Father. Of course, if it was a normal problem then it would just end with his head falling.

But due to the strangeness of the matter this time, I said to hold back the execution.

The word that male chef had said, the word “Danger”.

I was questioning that, did that not mean that poison was added to the wine?

However, I had investigated afterwards but, there was no trace of poison being added. The wineglass wasn’t coated either.

In summary, my personal opinion is that there is no poison.

Something other than poison? Maybe he sensed that an arrow was to be fired at Father from within the castle, and immediately distracted him?

However, my younger brother Gingus is disagreeing and stubbornly wishes for him to be sentenced early. I don’t know why he’s so impatient but, on the contrary I’m gaining time by opposing him.

There’s sufficient time to investigate. But no evidence or traces could be found.

I was able to somehow guess that Gingus had done something just looking at him.

It was when those days continued. That Gann brought his report.

Holding the information of the cook, Shuri Azuma.

The contents were shocking.

Somehow it’s the wineglass that Gingus had presented Father, and even gave me. Looking at that, it seems Shuri Azuma had knocked it down to the ground in panic.

However, I had investigated the wineglass but, it shouldn’t have anything strange or worth mentioning.

It wasn’t even coated with poison, a very ordinary glass. Father uses it with pleasure but, I don’t use it that often. It wasn’t that I didn’t like it or anything. I use it sometimes and I like the design as well so I have used it.

However, that glass was made very detailedly.

Just iron plating. If it's just that then I wouldn't think there would be any problems.

Father has a peculiar body condition.

After holding an iron sword to practise, there are times when his hands would become red and itchy. Everyone had thought that it was simply, fatigue showing up on his hands. Naturally, I had too.

But, what Shuri Azuma knew was far more severe.

A rare disease. If there were a few words to describe it, that would be it.

That strange disease is one where, by drinking water which had been soaked in metals and irons, it will build up some poison or something inside the body and will one day suddenly outbreak out of nowhere. A terrifying disease.

There's no method to treat it, and if you are negligent, acting like it's nothing serious in the beginning, then suddenly someday terrifying symptoms will appear.

There's nothing more terrifying than this. Because there's no way to even treat it.

I had also used the wineglass but, the number of times was low and unlike Father, since I've never had the body condition where something usually happens when I touch metals, it didn't turn bad.

If this is true then, Gingus has committed a serious crime.

I must dig into this problem and work hard to neatly control the current situation.

Holding such intents, I decided to follow Gann and go meet Shuri Azuma.

"Hey Gann. There's one thing I want to ask"

"What is it, Ekress-sama"

"In order to properly observe the person known as Shuri, I wonder how should I go about it?"

Maybe he couldn't grasp the intent of my question? Gann was at a loss of

words.

Right now we headed over to Shuri Azuma's cell hoping that no one can find us.

It was currently nighttime. There was no sign of life in the corridor, just relying on the light of the small candle.

I don't know when I might meet someone. Disregarding me but, it would be bad to be seen together with Gann.

Gann's current status, he has become Gingus's subordinate as my spy.

Which is why, we cannot afford to not be careful.

"Even after reading your report, I don't understand the person called Shuri Azuma.

He wasn't very panicked when he had knocked down the Feudal Lord-sama's wineglass, despite that it looks like now that it's come to this he's slightly panicking.

Cooking in the cell, not even considering escape.

Even though at this rate, he might be killed.

As far as the report goes, he is quite a strange person"

"If that's the case, would you like to let him cook as a test?"

"Cook?"

"Yes. If we do that, I think that you'll be able to understand well what type of person he is"

I didn't really understand but, it seems Gann has confidence in what he says.

I can understand what type of person he is if I let him cook, huh.

Let's try it then.

"Then, what do you think is the most appropriate dish?"

"Would a dish made of Potatoes be alright?"

"Potatoes?"

I was imagining much more luxurious ingredients but, is it alright with just that?

Potatoes are an ingredient which can be easily obtained. It's unit price is cheap too. If we cultivate it, then we can harvest a lot.

In summary, it's an easy ingredient which can be attained anywhere.

"Yes. You'll understand what kind of guy he is if you eat his potato dishes.

Only like that, will you also understand, like I had written in my report, how it's possible he can change the history of food."

Hmm, something like that was indeed written.

Even though it's just potato dishes he has a repertoire.

Each and every one of them being delicious and easy to copy.

And then, his cooking is the best indicator of how dangerous the person himself is.

"I understand. Potatoes and…. I know, let's have him make something with bacon"

"Ekress-sama"

"I know. Currently bacon is a luxury in our territory. If I don't end this political strife then, the citizens will only suffer.

Which is why, it's also necessary to make sure what kind of person he is in order to end this struggle"

If, the person called Shuri Azuma is a man who is unfathomable even to me then.

I have to be on his side no matter what happens.

That is also the best way for me to be safe.

The least we can do is probably secretly letting him escape, returning to Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp, and having to work out a compromise.

Because if we don't do that, right about now that demon is probably vigilantly watching us for an opportunity to pierce our throats with his fangs, and refining

his plans.

Internal strife with Gingus, and Ganglabe outside the castle.

Ahh, what a headache.

If we steer this the wrong way, this territory may be eradicated.

Even though I say that, I don't want continue being the heir of the territory that much.

It's not like I particularly have to be the heir anyway.

It's just that it would be good if it didn't become the worse case scenario, Sounity disappearing.

"Now then Gann. Hurry up and bring out the potatoes and bacon you've stuffed in your pockets"

"W-what do you mean"

"Even if you didn't hide it, the fact that you've been secretly buying food and giving it to Shuri-kun to cook is obvious.

I was leading you on but to think that I had hit the mark"

My instincts too, were unexpectedly valuable.

He looks at the ingredients like he's about to cry but, Gann is the one in the wrong, trying to eat it secretly.

Preparing the ingredients, Gann and I descend down to the jail.

As always, for some reason I don't want to come here.

It's like there are grudges whirling around, what a gloomy atmosphere.

"Gann, you were eating delicious meals with Shuri-kun in this sort of place?"

"Well…. yea"

"In this damp, depressing place?"

"Yes"

"In this gloomy place?"

"…Yes"

“Hmmm”

I understood one thing.

He’s a weird one.

Going down and standing in front of the cell, there he was.

With black hair and a body unlike that of a typical warrior.

Plus his face too was somehow different to ours. It’s almost as if I was looking at a person from another country.

Such a person was lying down, trying to sleep.

Well, he’s sleeping face seems cute though.

How should I say this, he’s like a normal peaceful person who doesn’t know of war.

“Shuri, are you awake?”

Gann said to him.

Shuri-kun tried to get up sleepily.

He sure is a big-shot. Since he is trying to get a good night sleep in this kind of place.

Normally they would be lamenting their misfortune and curling up.

“Fuwaaa… what’s wrong, so late at night.

Er, I don’t actually know the time though”

Shuri-kuns says extremely sleepily.

“There’s someone I want you to meet”

“Can’t it wait till tomorrow…?”

He is without a question an important person.

Being so brazen in front of me. It wouldn’t be strange for him to even be a king in the future.

“No, I want you to meet today”

“Who is it…?”

“The eldest son of the Feudal Lord who governs this area, Ekress-sama”

“Yes. You’re welcome anytime!”

Seeing Shuri-kun suddenly springing up into seiza, I realised I had made a mistake in my judgement.

He is a coward. And the same as an ordinary person, the type to shrink in fear in front of a person of high rank.

Or so I had thought but…. What is it. I have a feeling that even in front of great people, he would act like a clown. I wonder why?

“Then, Ekress-sama”

“Un, thank you Gann”

I stood in front of the cell Gann invited me to.

Looking at him again, there is indeed something different about him.

I would be troubled if I was asked why he’s different but, things that different are different.

(TL: 違うものは違う - I can’t help it ok :v even if it means people die when they are killed) What is it, this feeling.

I can’t stop this gush of curiosity.

“Hahaha. Are you surprised. I am the one called Ekress Sounity.

Your name is?”

“Yessu yua hainessu! I am called Azuma Shuri!

Azuma is my surname and Shuri is my name!”

What a strange name.

Surname first then his name.

I’ve never heard of such a naming custom.

I knew it, he is different.

“Well then, is it alright to call you Shuri Azuma?”

“Yessu!”

I see, I said it like that but it’s fine either way.

However, looking at it like this, is he a coward?

An easygoing feeling was appearing and disappearing in his words.

Since he looks serious I don’t think that’s it but….

Is it just my imagination?

“Well then Shuri-kun. I actually have something I want to discuss with you.

I wonder if you have time right now?”

“Naturally it exists”

I didn’t imagine it. Most likely, this is how he is.

Even when he’s trying to be serious, he still acts foolish..

But, a person who can play the fool to the extent of making me laugh is rare.

I laughed a bit.

“You are a pleasant person. It’s rare that someone will make me laugh so much”

“I don’t really understand but… could it be that I was rude….?”

Of course it was rude.

Incredibly rude.

But, he made me laugh so I guess it’s irrelevant.

“Ahh, it’s alright. This time it’s unofficial so I don’t mind if you aren’t so respectful”

“Cause if you were rude, I would have cut off your head”

Wha-, Gann!

Couldn’t you have just let it go? I warn him with a grim face!

See, Shuri-kun is scared.

No, it might be better if he is quiet with a little fear so that he’s a little more obedient.

“Now then Shuri-kun. I want to talk but. Is it alright?”

“Talk?”

“Ahh, it seems like you’ve cooked a lot for Gann right?”

“Eh?”

“You don’t have to hide it. I’ve even read a report. Thank you for caring about Gann’s physical condition”

For Gann’s sake, he made dishes which can suppress the drinking of alcohol.

In this situation where we can pretty much only eat potatoes, he found a solution and cooked for him.

He is also a kind person who cares for others.

Even if a clan of people were to be placed into a jail like this, they would toughen up ※ Simply, being able to converse calmly is good evidence of that.

(TL: I’m deproving - こんな、牢屋に入れた一族の人を前にしても荒らげる※ことなく、落ち着いて対話できているのがいい証拠だ。) If it isn’t for that then he might try to assault me from somewhere.

“I just, wanted to cook something delicious….”

“Fufu, you’re modest.

Now, here is the real discussion”

That’s right, the real topic is starts now.

From the conversation until now, I’ve understood 40% of how he is.

But, I cannot grasp the other 60% no matter what.

Is he a coward?

Is he bold?

Is he irresponsible?

Is he a person who can scheme?

I have to make sure of it here.

I signal with my eyes and Gann takes out the potatoes and bacon that he had

brought to eat in secret from his pockets.

He tears up a little but like I care. It's punishment for trying to eat the delicious things by yourself.

"Right now, our territory is suffering from a serious food shortage. So much so that even I, the son of the feudal lord, think that just these two ingredients lined up on a table is luxurious.

Now, if it was you. How would you prepare these ingredients?"

Bacon and potatoes.

What comes to mind is stir-fry. Stir-frying the potato together with the bacon.

Then, steaming the potato and garnishing it with bacon. I think this is the orthodox way.

I wonder if there's also a secret technique that's used to wrap bacon around the potato.

Now, I wonder what you will do?

"Do you have salt?"

"There's no seasonings this time"

Speaking of which I hadn't prepared any.

I exchange looks with Gann and he shook his head.

You, if I recall, don't you carry fish sauce and dried clams with you?

Well who cares.

"This bacon, has it already been flavoured?"

"No, it's something that has been processed normally"

This bacon is coated with a lot of salt for the purpose of preservation.

Anyhow it's what Father eats. So there's no way it's allowed to rot.

Then it is flavoured with large amounts of seasoning to adjust the taste.

If you eat it normally, it's enough to be a replacement for flavour.

At any rate, if you don't flavour it so that it's at least salty it'll rot in a blink of

an eye.

“Then let’s make a Potato Galette.

There should be enough flavour.”

Galette?

It’s a name I hear for the first time.

He takes the potato and starts peeling them with his practised hands.

‘He really is experienced’, was what I thought.

Anyhow, while the skin is connected in one piece, the width and thickness as well were being peeled consistently.

Then the potato was cut thinly.

Thinly?

And the thin potato slices were then mixed with the even smaller cut bacon.

Turning on the heat, tossing them into the pot floating on top of a mysterious paper, raising the heat then frying.

That’s when I understood that he was being careful not to crumble the shape.

Arranging the shape to be, round.

Once both sides had finished frying, this time he lowers the heat and roasts it thoroughly.

Ahh, the smell is irresistible.

Strange. There shouldn’t have been any seasoning or anything added.

Despite that the potato and bacon could be cooked nicely. I was once again made to feel that, ‘Such a good smell can come from just that?’.

After he finished cooking, he picks up a nearby plate, and hands to me that cooked round thing.

“It’s finished. Please enjoy the flavour of the bacon.”

“Thank you. However, I’ve never seen this dish before.

It’s almost looks like the potatoes are stretching out slightly, as if they are

burying the bacon inside it.”

That’s right, the potatoes which were all over the place looked as if they were burying the bacon becoming one.

Despite that, it looks strange and seemingly delicious.

If I think about it simply, this is potato and bacon stir-fry.

That’s what it should be. It should be.

But, why is it.

When such a strange method has come up, even its appearance is interesting.

In my thoughts, is this not a snack to go with alcohol?

After signalling to Gann behind me, he prepared a fork and knife for me.

Perhaps, he has eaten this before.

This preparedness.

Now then, shall I eat.

Simply cutting it up into a bite, I eat it.

“…Hou”

What I understood in the outright was that, even though it’s simple and quick, this is well thought out dish.

Something which wouldn’t occur if the potatoes were crushed and simmered, the bacon’s fried oils pours into the gaps of the potato, mixing and combining the flavours.

Biting into the potato, the deliciousness of the fats from the potato and bacon exit out from that gap.

That fat and the sweetness of the potato merge inside my mouth, becoming a wonderful flavour.

The texture of the potato is good too.

Crispy and crunchy.

It’s almost like I’m eating a light snack at 3 o’clock, that lightness.

If this came out as an entree, I think it would be a dish with no complaints.

Of course, this itself is not enough to fill me up.

It seems like even if another dish came out, I could still eat it.

However you get strangely addicted to the flavour.

Above all else, the bacons ratio is wonderful.

It's not so much so that the potato's flavour is killed it.

It's not so little so, that the flavour of the oil isn't enough.

If this dish had too little bacon then, it's just a guess but, I think there wouldn't be any flavour at all.

It's due to the bacon having seasoning in the first place that the flavour of the potato can come to live.

I see, so that's why even if there's no seasoning it was still enough.

It's true that this bacon was salty from the beginning.

The saltiness for the sake of preservation was softened mildly by the potato.

That's why it's not too strong.

Thus, delicious.

"It's wonderful. Indeed the flavour is properly there. It's strange. Even though there shouldn't be any other seasoning added at all."

"That is the flavour of the bacon itself moving to the potato, combining with the sweetness of potato to become that taste"

I see, it's just like I thought, ne.

By transferring the far too heavy flavours of the bacon to the potato, it becomes just right, ne.

This means that it's a dish which subtracts from the bacon with the potato.

Rather than a meal, it's closer to a dessert though.

No, is it an alcoholic side-dish?

"Un un, it's certainly as you say. If you eat this bacon, which is also good

preserved, for breakfast even if it's just accompanying something else, the quality of the flavour jumps up.

However, in the end it's just garnishing it with something else or frying it.

Doing it like this, burying the bacon in the potato as one dish is uncommon. The people in town, can easily copy this"

That's right, the point which is most appreciative is that it's "Easy to copy".

No matter if it's the report or the dish I see in front of me, all of them were "Simple" things.

And it can all be cooked with ingredients that were "Easy to obtain".

Potatoes, clams, fish sauce, as well as butter.

Bacon is slightly different but, if it was before the food shortage in the current political strife then, it's all foods that even commoners could buy.

Basically for organisational management, like in a mercenary corp where it's difficult managing capital, he is able to make meals that bring no complaints with things they are able to buy.

Surely in Ganglabe-dono's mercenary corp, even if they had some problems or difficulties, I think no fatal problems etc, had occurred.

If meals like this were given as the salary as another form of payment every time then, things like complaints won't come up.

"Wonderful. Certainly, with this amount of skill in cooking, I too understand why Ganglabe-dono says he doesn't want to let you go"

"How is Ganglabe-san doing?"

Shuri-kuns asked worriedly.

I see, that is indeed something to worry about.

Currently Ganglabe-dono is being held in a certain inn in the castle's town.

In addition to that he is together with the other commanders.

As for subordinates, several units are in a different inn, or several tens of units are being crammed in the guard's office.

However, it wouldn’t be strange if they erupt at any time.

In the first place even if we inform them and put them into house-arrest, after they went to war and won, the contract had ended at that point in time.

Despite that, we recklessly ordered to take a hostage.

Indeed, Shuri-kun had been rude.

That truth as well, I think I can get some proof if I cross examined it with the related places and the investigation from here on.

The details of the glass, he made an immediate decision since its dangerous to the Feudal Lord.

If I had to say it, Shuri-kun is our benefactor.

If that was to be known then, even Ganglabe-dono won’t be quiet.

Right now a territory award and a hostage is dangling in front of him but, it’s likely that he might revolt with his subordinates all at once if he feels like it.

Ahh, my head hurts.

Continuing to hide this truth, skillfully drawing out a common ground, letting this end peacefully.

I’m sick of it all.

When I think that, I understand just how attractive the status of Shuri-kun in front of me is.

Even though he is in a mercenary corp, in a mercenary corp where the death rate is low, as a cook which has an even lower death rate.

Cooking up food he likes, deciding his everyday raison’detre.

Ahh, doing the things he likes like this, if I live however I like I wonder just how productive my everyday will be.

Maybe, I should try joining Ganglabe’s mercenary corp as well.

I actually thought that such a sudden suggestion was not bad at all.

Right now, once this political problem and correspondence with Ganglabe-dono has ended, it might be good to secretly enter the mercenary corp myself.

At that time, I'll return to being a woman, and I can be in charge of accounting and office work since I'm good at calculations and such.

I'll take Gann as well, and while we work under Shuri-kun he can gather information and such.

Working hard while eating these meals everyday.

Somehow, I had hunch that the ideal life was right there.

Since I've decided that, let's try negotiating it discreetly.

It might work if I guide him into an offer he can't refuse, and invoke his sympathy as much as I can.

"Right now, they are being confined in the town outside the castle. Crammed in separate inns."

"Then, they're just fine"

Shuri-kun shows his relief straightforwardly.

As expected, it seems he hasn't heard anything from Gann.

I'm didn't stop him but, Gingus stubbornly did.

Since he didn't know what Shuri would do, but it is indeed effective.

Like this, making the opponent feel anxious, the worse case is that there's also a chance that they end up acting rashly.

Even though it's fine to give him a peace of mind by mixing some lies into as well.

But, this time rather than relief, I smile bitterly and utilise his anxiousness.

"However, because the reason for your actions are unknown, they may be be subjected to punishment under the crime of disrespect"

"Ehhh"

This isn't a lie.

Even now, other than me, Gingus and Gann, no one knows the truth.

Given that I didn't know the reason, I thought of cross-examining Shuri and confirming the answer.

In any case it’s obvious I’ll be forcing upon my own opinions, faking good information.

“I understand what you want to say. I received the report from Gann. However, right now a political strife is happening within the territory. If I don’t do something about that, I cannot even help you get out of here. In addition, if we continue to waste time like this, Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp might not stand it anymore and erupt. If it comes to that then most likely, I’ll be killed”

This is also true.

Once Ganglabe-dono realises the truth, I wonder what he’ll do.

If I was him, let’s see.

First, cross-examine those close to the Feudal Lord about why they arrested our comrades unfairly.

And then using a threat called a negotiation, then maybe request for a large amount of land and the return of our comrade.

Furthermore request money as well. The expenses for the inn and damages, and then to include the late fees for the employment in the salary for the subordinates as well.

Maybe by using the period of employment and so on as a false pretense. It’s certain we were aiming for their permanent employment with the talk of granting them land, and since at that point in time there’s no doubt it was the subordinates at fault, so it shouldn’t actually trouble the mercenary corp’s employment contract though.

During the time they were in house arrest, there shouldn’t be a problem with their treatment either.

However, Ganglabe-dono wouldn’t forgive.

Taking away his comrade, shaming him, there’s no way he’ll be quiet about it.

If he refuses then, no, supposing he refuses and the negotiations breakdown, he might start to overthrow everyone belonging to the Feudal Lord and take over castle’s vicinity under a just cause.

After all, many days have passed since Shuri-kun has been locked up. During

that time, the vicinity around the castle has been suffering from a food shortage. Since there are many citizens who are unsatisfied, a little provocation might be enough for them to riot.

And I wonder if a map of the castle's vicinity has been made. Since the enemies have been captured in our pockets, I think it's possible to do as many investigations as we want.

Of course, they are being monitored by other spies but, mobilizing while they haven't noticed is quite conspicuous. It can't be helped that I'm already anxious about the many spies who are monitoring the inn where the commanders are.

If it's Gann, I'm not worried though.

Start moving once everything is in order. Gaining control of the castle while inciting the citizens, about the food shortage and bringing chaos to the castle town, then piling up all the insecurity and dissatisfaction till now and decapitate the entire Feudal Lord's clan.

Announcing that since there's no one to restore the territory, he'll do it himself.

Thus, the birth of Feudal Lord Ganglabe.

At that time, I will also definitely be killed.

"That's why, I have a preposition"

"?"

"Won't you take me with you and run away?"

"E-Ekress-sama?!"

Naturally, the one behind me, Gann is also surprised. Well, it's only natural. Without consulting him, suddenly saying that the Feudal Lord's eldest son (daughter) is going to run away, is obviously going to shock a subordinate even an elder brother.

But this is necessary for me to survive, moreover to live a meaningful life.

"I have thought about this. Whether it's the problem this time, or the things up till now. If I try to unify this territory, I will become "Twisted" somewhere.

Thus, I thought it would be better if I was gone.

But I was anxious to do so. I mean, am I able to flee from this place, run off to town and live a life?

That's where you come in. If we have your skill in cooking, then with the support of Gann and I, we'll be able to survive in the town with no problems.

Of course, I'll be hitting this problem with all my power as well. Once it's over, I'll give up the right to be heir and retire.

What do you think? Won't you take me away from here?"

It's a slightly unfair transaction but, Shuri-kun probably doesn't understand this.

This, pulling at the sympathy strings while, giving praise to the other, showing compromise saying I'll help as well, and then telling him the request.

In fact, it troubles Shuri-kun quite a bit.

Most likely, it feels like the situation will become chaotic to the point I cannot even imagine myself, and then forcing him lend us a hand.

After Shuri-kun worries over it a little, he looks at me and said.

"Understood. After we leave it seems you'll become a cook alongside me under Ganglabe-san but, is that alright?"

"I don't mind. As long as we can leave this place"

That's how, 『Me and Gann's Last Resort』 has been arranged.

After that, I left behind the jail, once again carefully returned to my room.

Luckily, no one found us and I think 60% of all our problems have been dealt with.

However.

"Ekress-sama. What did you mean by that!"

Gann presses me for an answer.

"To start a plan to run away as the eldest son of the Feudal Lord of all people, what exactly are you planning!

Also, the one you're dealing with is a criminal!"

"….Gann. Is there anyone?"

"….No. My senses do not perceive any presence"

"Then I'm relieved. Fix your tone and talk"

Gann loosens up his collar, takes in a deep breath and said to me.

"It's true that Shuri is trustworthy and safe. That's what I understood these past few days.

However you know, Ekreniss. There's no way you can just suddenly escape outside and survive, right.

A mercenary corp is just that much of a convoluted organisation. The reason that guy can survive is because his unique cooking technique has been recognised.

If you join, what can you do"

It's a reasonable argument.

"Now listen. At that time, Gann-niisan. You'll come too"

"Haaa!?"

Gann opens his eyes wide in surprise.

Well of course.

"Why me!?"

"Well, because if you stay here, you'll always just be worked hard by Father or Gingus.

Rather than that, don't you want to be able to walk outside and look at different things?

I want to see. The world that can be seen through him, is definitely vast.

More so than this room, ne"

Ahh, my dreams getting bigger.

"You…. are you an idiot…"

“I think that living like an idiot seems more fun”

Besides, I said looking at him seriously.

“Listen. Ganglabe-dono isn’t stupid. He’ll definitely learn of the truth from somewhere.

Once that happens, he won’t let neither me nor you go safely.

He probably doesn’t trust us.

It’s an insurance in case that happens.

Luckily, I’m known to the outside as a man.

When the time comes, if I wear worn-out clothes together with Shuri-kun as well and enter the jail, it’ll probably work out somehow”

“Haa…. You, you’re really an idiot”

While he says that, Gann also laughs a bit.

“But, I too have promised to be taught cooking by that guy, na

I’ll come with you at that time”

Hahaha. I knew it. Didn’t Gann want to get out of this place as well.

“Please help me at that time, ne”

“Ahh, of course!?”

Then, Gann looks to the window and suddenly rushed to it.

Opening it, looks down.

“What’s wrong?”

“An intruder!”

“Eh!?”

“I lost focus. There was no presence whatsoever!

That is…. Teg-dono!”

Teg!?

I hurriedly look outside from the window but, I could only see a mysterious

shadow riding fast into the darkness of night.

That's superhuman. So that's the scouting technique of the Archery Saint Teg!

I didn't know at all.

Here, on the fourth floor even though there shouldn't be a balcony, how did he get here!?

"This is bad, he might have heard the talk just now!"

"Starting from when though!?"

"I fear, from start to beginning.

From the mark left behind on the window, he has hung on for quite some time.

Since I came here and brought the report"

That long?!

"This is bad….. Ganglabe-dono knows the truth"

"That, it's become troublesome…..

The worse case scenario might come true…."

"Ekreniss. You might have no choice but to use your insurance."

"Right…."

I sigh and said.

It's the worse case scenario….

This was the meeting of me, Ekreniss and Shuri.

(Author's note: I'm sorry the update came late.

As written in the blog posts, regarding everyone's thoughts, I've been worrying about various matters and I'm exhausted, I'm sorry for troubling everyone.

From now on, I'll try my best magnificently.

Of course, once I calm down, I'll quickly reply to everyone's thought!

Please look forward to it!

By the way, I've finally defeated the Bloodthirsty beast in Bloodborne (TL: I

don’t play bloodborn so I don’t know which monster he’s talking about :v) From here I plan to skip the church’s studio. (TL: Again he should be talking about bloodborne and while I want to watch cryaotic play it… gotta translate amirite :o))

Chapter 31 - Code Hamburg - Rirushu of the Rebellion

"…… I see, so there were such circumstances"

"Yes, su. In short, the reason he was arrested was just because he was caught in the conspiracies of the second son, su"

"Screw off. How did Shuri get involved in that"

"Seriously"

In one of the inn rooms, I received the report from Teg.

It was a simple room, there were only two beds and nothing to kill time with.

Having five commanders crammed here, it's a room which makes you feel it's cramped.

We were being confined in that inn.

We, Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp has been ordered on house arrest at the inn for disrespecting the Feudal Lord of Sounity.

The reason for that, lies in Shuri.

Things were running smoothly until halfway through that banquet. When the amazingly roasted pig came out, I had raised both arms in joy because I finally possess land.

However, Shuri suddenly knocked the Feudal Lord's wineglass to the ground.

Shuri was imprisoned for disrespect, and we were ordered to be in house arrest in the inns prepared for us until they get to the bottom of the matter.

It's obvious but, the contract between Sounity and our mercenary corp had already ended. Because when we had won the war, we had fulfilled the contract.

So it would have been fine to immediately take a firm stand then and there but, since I was panicking over not getting my piece of land, it ended up hesitating my judgement.

And then, my subordinates were locked up in a different inn, and that's why

we are being crammed like sardines in here.

“According to that, then that means Shuri saved the Feudal Lord”

And then I thought after I was been confined in the inn.

The other commanders too, they couldn’t say it but, I think they’re thinking about Shuri’s actions.

It’s not a lie that I feel Shuri is to blame for this. Because if he didn’t do such a thing then, right about now I should have land and be building a town on it, I should have one foot in my dream already.

And that, because he did such a thing, it’s become complicated and became ruined.

I had thought that if I met him I’ll confess to him all my pent-up frustrations.

However, no matter how much I think, a strange feeling comes gushing up. My complaints as well, they well up and then instantly sink and end up disappearing.

Shuri isn’t a guy to do that sort of thing without a reason.

Despite how he looks, he has a surprisingly stubborn side to him. Whether it was dealing with me, or Newbyst, or even Alturia, he conquered it with his wits and cooking skill.

Such a guy, I don’t think he would be disrespectful without a thought or cause.

That, the other commanders also agreed on.

Riru said that Hamburg Steak’s don’t lie. I don’t get it at all.

Cougar said that for now he wanted to eat his cooking. Me too.

Ahrius said that there’s still much to do for our marriage celebrations. I agree.

Teg said that he can’t ignore his close friends. That’s true.

Close friend. Comrade. Family.

That’s good enough for a reason.

That guy is a person who can walk side by side with us five childhood friends.

To me Shuri is one of my few friends who can laugh by my side.

That’s enough reason to believe in him.

Once that was decided, it was quick.

First we started by constructing a method to contact our subordinates.

Stripping the floorboards of the inn’s rooms, Riru and Ahrius made a hole which connects to the outside.

Once that was open, Teg and Cougar went out, being vigilant about the surroundings. With Teg’s scouting techniques, Cougar was sent as his guard.

Once it’s confirmed that it’s safe, relying on Teg to go around to the inns and contact our subordinates. For this purpose, they use the paper that Riru invented.

This paper was something that Shuri taught them as a prank a long time ago. It’s something where you write letters with some juice from any fruit, then warm it with fire, burning the juice and the letters raise to the surface. Perhaps I should say that it’s too childish or it’s too simple, it’s the sort of thing which can’t be used in wars at all but, it seems to have given Riru more than enough inspiration.

Re-engineering it magically, it became a special secret code paper. Even if it was stolen, they probably would have no idea what’s written on it.

Carrying that, Teg visited each inn. Getting in touch with our subordinates.

What we understood at that time was the difference between the veterans and the newcomers.

The newcomer subordinates were venting their angers at Shuri without even trying to hide it.

The veteran subordinates were trusting Shuri, and laughing at him, that ‘he just can’t be helped’.

I see, Shuri had unexpectedly deepened the bonds with the subordinates who had been with him longer. That is definitely good direction.

Within the subordinates, with the cooperation of the Teg’s archery unit and Riru’s magic engineer unit, they constructed a contact network and information network. Afterwards we shared various information with each other.

First, Shuri is ok. He hasn't been killed yet. He is under surveillance in the castle's dungeon.

There was no further information on that. Maybe the jailor is extremely tight-lipped or maybe the information is being hidden from us intentionally.

The first prince and second prince were in a political strife. It's concerning Shuri's punishment. The first prince is in the faction of letting him live, the second prince is for him to be killed. Most likely, this has to do with the matter this time. The one who can win over this will extend their influence. Perhaps however, if I had to say it, I wouldn't call this a political strife.

I think this is just a clash in opinion.

However, the one who is seriously attacking this political strife is the second prince. Extending his influence, perhaps he is using this opportunity to try to move up in the ranks and become the heir.

The first prince? When I ask about him, it seems he is also extending his influence and stockpiling his wealth.

That wealth however, seems to be split with the poor.

Contrary to the first prince who has gained the popularity of the citizens, in order for the second prince to gain the support of castle's subordinates he might be turning to the inside. (TL: 内側へ意識が向いている)?

Taking advantage of that, I polished my plans.

Despite going along with the castle's fight, despite turning the public opinion to support the first prince.

For the sake of when the time comes, I leak out some of Shuri's information.

With 80% lies and 20% truths though!

The 20% that is true is that Shuri is being confined.

The 80% lies are.

When the kind chef called Shuri on the request of the Feudal Lord showed off his cooking, the second prince found something to nitpick on and confined him, then he tried to force him to be a slave for his own cooking purposes, but Shuri

refused and said that even if he met him with crueler eyes, he'll defend his dignity as a chef, proudly enduring this, thus his mercenary corps' comrades, for the sake of righteousness are standing up for him.

Or something similar to that story is quickly being spread about.

The popular opinion is slightly spreading between a revolt and support for the first prince but, I think that by the time Shuri is released it'll turn for the worst. I won't be taking responsibility.

And then when our information network and incitement was completed, that's when Teg, who had infiltrated the castle to gather intelligence, gained information about Shuri and the First Prince Ekress.

The simple summary of it is.

The reason why Shuri knocked over the wineglass is because the detailedly made wineglass was dangerous to the Feudal Lord's body.

And the one who made that was the Second Prince Gingus.

The First Prince Ekress has requested that in exchange for saving Shuri, he wants Shuri to take him and run away.

That's the gist of it.

"However, who would've thought the first prince was female"

"I was surprised too, su. I had thought that the first prince was gender neutral, but he was actually his subordinates little sister, su. I couldn't believe my ears when I heard their conversation.

The rest was thanks to him not paying attention, su. Since I was able to also look over the report carefully, su."

"Most likely but, if so much information was handed to him behind the scenes then, that subordinate person was probably quite confident in his spying skills.

Because if he wasn't, he wouldn't be able to be a double agent."

"If that was found out, he'll definitely be killed. Since the Second Prince will definitely flip out"

That's true.

That man, Gann, is not just anyone if he is able to notice Teg's presence. Whether he didn't pay attention or nervous, it's normal for this guy's presence erasure to be undetectable.

After Shuri came, he piled on the training, and learnt scouting and spying techniques. Teg's skill surpasses experts. There had also been wars which had been saved with his information.

However to have actually noticed him.

"Regarding where Shuri is being held?"

"I think it's just like we heard, under the castle, su. Here, it's simple but I tried drawing a map, su"

Looking over the paper that Teg handed to me, the route until where Shuri is held has been drawn.

Since I've indeed had a tour inside the castle during the time for the contract and the time for the banquet, it's enough if I have this much information.

"Ok. Now, regarding the matter with the First Prince Ekress but.

That guy is saying that he wants to join our mercenary corp.

Most likely, it's because we wouldn't have known his true self, he probably thought it would be simple if he went back to being a woman.

However, he might use another trick now that he's caught"

When I get the information and attack, I will definitely cause harm to the entire clan of Sounity.

It was probably an insurance for that time. It's something I can praise.

And this is probably how he suggested it to Shuri.

I'll help the mercenary corp. In exchange, help me escape from death.

I grinded my teeth. Since it's an unfair negotiation.

It's true that unfairness is something that comes with negotiations. Since even I, am spreading rumours and inciting riots.

However Shuri has no history fighting, furthermore he's a prisoner. There's no

way he could've refused.

If even the first prince turns to the faction for Shuri's execution, Shuri will die.

There is no way I can approve of such a person to be our comrade.

"For example, what would he do? Ganglabe"

Cougar was also tightening together his folded arms.

There's no doubt he's angered by Shuri's current situation and Ekress' negotiation.

"Let's see. It wouldn't be strange for the second prince to take a firm step anytime now.

At any rate he tried to harm his own father. It's not something that can be forgiven even if he is part of the clan. There's a possibility he might be revoked of his right of heir.

Before that, Ekress will take Shuri and run away.

The one who noticed the information leak was Ekress' subordinate, Gann.

When we begin to mobilise, the ones who have the best chance of escaping are only those two.

If they even have Shuri, with his skill in cooking, they can escape as many times as they want.

It could be a food cart or a shop, since they're fine as long as they can keep wandering around while having that guy cook"

This is one of the depictions I have of it going in a "Bad directions".

Shuri's cooking ability is recognised by everyone here.

Truthfully speaking, it's not once or twice that we thought that if he didn't join our corp and set up a shop, he would probably flourish with success.

However if in addition to that skill, he also has specialised subordinates who are good at business calculations and can get information then, he is able to travel while pulling along the food cart however many times he wants.

Basically, using him to run far away.

“In addition, he immediately secures Shuri using his subordinate. Thus he is also able to use Shuri to deal with us on equal terms on the negotiation table.”

This is also a picture of a “Bad direction”.

The fault for this time’s situation is obviously theirs.

There was probably a need to gather evidence but, when we demanded that from them, the Feudal Lord’s side didn’t just let it go with just that.

We had to hand over large amounts of compensation and damages.

To crush the Feudal Lord’s side, it’s impossible to make sure that we aren’t spreading to the streets. It’s too late, since my subordinates have already created the foundations to guide the public opinion.

If you think that this is something you can just apologize for then, I’ll just spread the reason for the recent food shortage.

The second prince, in order to hide his own mistakes, has even killed citizens. And, he is a guy who doesn’t even care that the citizens had a food shortage and stockpiles his own food.

Leaking that information, and if I actually move to incite the citizens, they won’t stay quiet either. They’ll explode from dissatisfaction, and might even attack the castle.

Even right now, this current situation is only just barely maintained through Ekress’ support but, they’ll probably be angered if they knew the reason was because of the second prince.

Saying, don’t involve us with your family’s trash and such.

In any case, once the seed of dissatisfaction is planted, all we have to do is wait for it to bloom.

Which is why, in order to defend against that, they will use the captive Shuri to negotiate.

『We admit we’re wrong and apologise. In exchange, your subordinate returns safely』 and such.

It’ll be quite obvious that our side would flip out but, if they don’t do that, the

damage will become grave.

“There’s still a few things to do but, do you need an explanation?”

“Nope, su”

Teg replied shakily with an angry face.

“Please leave the evidence gathering to me, su. I don’t want my close friend to be in that sort of place any longer, su”

“I leave it to you”

“Until that time comes, I shall ensure my sword does not dull”

“I’m counting on you”

“I…”

Ignoring Teg and Cougar’s determination, Ahrius looked at the bed with concern.

“For now I’ll nurse over Riru”

Riru was currently sleeping on the bed.

She was broken.

I don’t know what she’s looking at, she only looks up.

A face lacking expression.

Her complexion a little ashen.

Her hair has white hairs mingled in.

Her skin was peeling off.

She was broken.

Riru was sleeping on the bed, broken.

“How is… she?”

“She still hasn’t regained consciousness”

Ahrius shook her head.

“She’s just muttering incoherently, there’s no response”

“I see…”

I said, completely amazed.

“Is she so shocked that she can’t eat Hamburg Steaks”

Yes, Riru has suddenly grown older since she wasn’t able to eat Hamburg.

In the first few days it was somewhat alright. She endured the terrible cooking in this inn.

However, it seems that the person herself has run out of the so called HP (Hamburg Power). I didn’t really understand.

And just like that, she couldn’t stand, she couldn’t get up, losing her strength just like this.

Occasionally, she would mutter “Potato…. a divine revelation, a hamburg steak that goes well with potatoes has…..”. It was creepy.

However, there’s no way we can just leave her like this anymore. It’s about time that we have to go all out gathering evidence and sorting information.

In the arrangements for saving Shuri, Riru is a necessary existence.

Now, awaken for me.

“Ahrius, there’s no longer a need to be her nurse”

“Eh? But….”

“I shall awaken her”

I approach Riru’s bed and whispered.

“Oi, can you hear me.

The plan to save Shuri has been decided. It’s time to move.

In the event that we save him, there’ll be a huge party with Shuri’s food”

Riru’s body twitched. Alright, there’s still a reaction.

“Having him make our favourite foods, let’s enjoy our reunion.

I think I’ll ask him to make me Cream Stew. I’ll eat till I’m full.

Cougar, what do you want to eat”

“Eh? …..Let’s see, maybe a good fish dish”

“Teg?”

“I’m fine with anything but, it would be nice if there’s Pot-au-feu. Otherwise Oden would be good too, su”

“How about you, Ahrius?”

“Of course, Boiled Tofu for me. My subordinates should also be wishing for it”

It seemed like they were drooling, thinking their various favourite foods.

Naturally, me as well.

“Since you’re just sleeping, is food which just fills you up better?

Or is…”

I stop for a second then said.

“Hamburg Steak better?”

Tremble! went Riru’s entire body.

Before my eyes, her complexion got better, her hair suddenly returned to it’s original vivid colour.

Her skin’s gloss and tone recovered. I could see that there was power in her lifeless eyes.

“Ah, since you’re was stuck in bed, then it’ll just be congee.

If it’s Shuri’s congee then it’ll probably be good.

But, is that alright for you?

Trying your best to endure the terrible tasting food of this inn up until today, was it all just for congee? When Shuri comes back, can congee satisfy you?

Of course not!

Smelling the fragrant flavour of the meat, when the knife cuts it apart you embrace the overflowing meat juices in your dreams, when you eat it, doesn’t the dream of tasting the simple salt and pepper, and the lightly flavoured sauce appear together and come to you!”

Yea, to be honest, I don't understand what I'm saying either.

The three people behind me were also watching me with cold eyes. Please stop.

"Awaken Riru! Only now can you be free!"

Thud! resounded the intense crash, the rooms dust soared.

"Who said that"

Amidst the curtain of dust, Riru stood.

"The people who can eat Hamburg is only the people who have the resolve to be eaten by Hamburg, I say"

"I dun get it, su….?"

Teg, don't say anything.

"That's why Riru's has accepted the Geass"

"Just because you want to eat Hamburg?"

Cougar, don't say anything I said.

"『Hamburg Fasting (Dread of Death)』, Riru resurrects"

"…."

That's right, it's fine to just watch on with gentle eyes, Ahrius.

The dust falls to the floor unlocking the view, and there, stood Riru.

A Junkie who has regained their strength.

"Thank you, Ganglabe.

It seems like Riru had a long dream"

"Cause you slept"

"That ends too. Now, let's begin"

Ba, Riru spreads out her hands and said.

"Operation『《Hamburg・Requiem》』"

"That's not the name though. Come on everyone, looks like the plays ended so

let’s elaborate on the operation”

It’s not good to just go with whatever this girl says.

Wait for us Shuri.

We’ll definitely save you.

(Author’s note: Everyone, I thank you for reading.

Recently, it’s just all been serious talk so, I came back with some funny stuff.

Yes, this is a 4-koma novel to the bitter end.

I plan to return to my original intention so I tried writing it.

From here on I’ll try to refrain from parody stuff as much as I can.)

Chapter 32 - Conclusion and Motsunabe (Beginning Chapter)

Circumstances are people that come and change, moment by moment.

Eh? It’s not a person?

No, It is. A person like a『Human』.

Maturing while you’re not aware, turning bad, doing good things, heading towards a bad direction.

And I got involved whilst not noticing that.

Bring right in the middle of the height of chaotic battlefield.

I had no idea, being a peaceful idiot who could only stand behind everyone.

And now, right here, my real worth is being tested.

It’s the jail life as always.

Hello, it’s Shuri.

I think one week has passed since Ekress-san has come.

Recently, neither Gann-san nor Ekress-san has come.

On the contrary, the person who delivers my food has changed, and won’t let me say a word.

The food hasn’t changed either. It’s those simple things.

“As expected, even the seasoning that I secretly brought has run out…”

Without seasoning I can’t even remake the meal.

Today as well, the meal is slightly hard to take.

I don’t think that Gann-san has come in over a week.

Ahh, the smell of freedom sure is nostalgic. I want to get out already.

However, I wonder what Gann-san is doing.

While I drink my soup, I thought about that carelessly.

I wonder if he is doing as Ekress-sama said previously, working on reaching a solution?

It would be nice if that's the case…

In the end, by being here I know absoo~lutely nothing.

"I wonder if everyone's alright"

Since there's a complete lack of information coming in about the outside, I have no idea if everyone is alright or not.

Hmmm….

I can't do anything even if I worry about it!

"For now, the best thing is that I'm not dead!"

For that sake, I shall finish this terrible meal and sleep!

Eating the food in one go, I lie down and slept once again.

"Shuri, are you awake?"

….This person, comes right when I'm sleeping. This is the second time, you know?

Getting up, Gann-san was standing with a mysterious expression.

"Sorry. Were you just about to sleep?"

"….No, it's alright"

At this time, be modest, modest. Modestly modest.

This is a Japanese person's sad nature.

"I have something I want to say to you"

"Haa…. Where's Ekress-san?"

"Master, doesn't know about this.

Ekress-sama is currently confronting the second prince, Gingus-sama"

….Confronting?

That means, Ekress-san has a little brother?

“Your information. We have confirmed the details of the wineglass.

For some reason Gingus-sama didn’t have a wineglass but, the Feudal Lord’s one still remained.

The who gave him that, Gingus-sama, is facing arrest in order to confirm the truth.”

Ehh?

As expected even I understand. That’s nothing short of reckless.

“Why do such rash thing?

Even if you say they’re both sons of the Feudal Lord, there’s no knowing what the other person might suddenly do, you know”

“For us, there is no time.

Do you remember? The matter that me and Ekress-sama came about, one week ago”

“Well, yea”

The time with the Galette.

“At that time, Teg-dono realised the truth”

“Teg-san, he’s here?!”

WTF, I don’t understand the situation outside.

“The fact that we want to depend on the mercenary corp, as well as the truth of the wineglass and the other side of this scandal as well.

They know all the information they need to know.”

“Is that so”

Teg-san has completed his work perfectly, naa.

“Basically. Even though it was our problem, we arrested you under disrespect and decided to put Ganglabe-dono in house arrest.

I think Ganglabe-dono is definitely angry.

Neither I or Ekress-sama, can escape to the mercenary corp anymore.

Which is why, we must at least reach a conclusion.

Overthrowing Gingus-sama, disposing of him properly, and handing over a large amount of awards and land.

If we don't do that, naturally the Feudal Lord, but even Ekress-sama will be harmed.

This is the current situation regarding the territory"

I-it's a more severe matter than I had thought…..

"Are? The one called Gingus-sama is the one who gifted the wineglass was it?"

"That's right.

I'll confess but, the Feudal Lord has been worried over the strange disease for a long time.

If he holds metal when he has no strength then, that spot would be red all over, and start itching.

It's just as your diagnosis says"

"As I thought, it's a metal allergy"

That's good. As expected, if he kept using the wineglass like that, it would've become a big deal. It's good I prevented it before something happened.

….Hn?

"Wait a minute please.

He did it on purpose despite being his son and knew about it?"

"That's right. That's what is called a political strife"

For the sake of power, the child will cut down the parent.

It's something that I've only seen in stories but….

To think that I'll actually experience this in real life!

I tremble a little from fear.

"T-then, Gann-san, what are you planning telling that to me?"

"…Who knows"

Eh?

“It’s already been decided that I’m going to die.

Before that, maybe I just wanted to make someone who knew the the current situation and truth.”

“Gann-san, will die?”

Eh? Why has come to that?

“I have something to say to you. I am actually the Feudal Lord’s son. The actual oldest son”

“Ehh?”

“Illegitimate…. I was born from the Feudal Lord and his lover.

My mother was a maid and the Feudal Lord made a move on her.

And then, after I was born, my mother was banished due to a plot from the jealous legal wife.

I don’t recognise the existence of my father…. the Feudal Lord but, without giving me the right to heir, since I’m was existence which couldn’t go public, I was raised as a spy”

“Eh, aren’t you a jailor?”

“I’m actually a spy. Being jailor was a fake post given to me in order to monitor you.

And after that, the one born from a concubine is, Ekress-sama.”

“Th-then, Ekress-san and Gann-san are…”

“We are …. brothers born from different mothers. Also Ekress-sama isn’t a man. She’s a woman.”

Ehhhhhhh!?

W-wait a minute!

“S-so it was actually such a complicated family!”

“Haha, I wonder if it can end with just the words complicated. I’ll continue.

The legal wife, banished the maid in jealousy but, couldn't do that with the concubine. Because if she was to banish a concubine who became one through the proper procedures, then the legal wife have been charged for that.

Besides, the one that was born was a girl so she was relieved.

However, that also went out the window due to the Feudal Lord's decision.

Ekress-sama is good at maths. If she was in charge of internal affairs then, she would demonstrate an unrivaled talent.

The Feudal Lord who noticed that, made Ekress-sama become a boy, and decided to raise her as the heir to the territory.

During that time, the one who was born was her younger brother, Gingus-sama"

It's become even more convoluted!?

"Ekress-sama who was raised magnificently as the heir specialised in internal affairs.

Even though Gingus-sama was born as the legal son, he was learned in military strategies and tactics.

Right now, what's happening within the territory is the political strife between the two.

And, it can be said that the criminal for this time's matter is Gingus-sama.

The wineglass, the unjust arrest, putting our saviours that Ganglabe-dono is leading into house arrest.

It's could not possibly be a forgivable matter.

In addition, it's something I knew of going over my sources but….

I think you are on friendly terms with Newbyst.

Sorting through the tools I had confiscated, I found a knife which had the emblem of the Newbyst royal family.

Just yesterday we received a letter from Newbyst.

Saying『To whom it concerns』

If this matter was known, it’ll greatly affect our food importation.

At any rate, the personage who was given the emblem was arrested unfairly.

Considering the other side, it’s because that someone important to them has been shamed.

To shame someone who has actually been given their emblem is no different to actually shaming the royal family.

There’s already no time.

The countdown to our ruin has already started”

Ehhhhhhh~?

Before I realised, the territory has fallen into critical condition!

This conversation progressed to a place that had nothing to do with me, and ended at a place I didn’t know about, is there more to this?

A situation like this, I’ve never heard about this anywhere though?

Even though I’m right in the middle of this whirlpool of a scandal, why am I still left out of this whole conversation!

This is way too lonely!

Ummm….

Doesn’t that mean I can’t do anything?

“Umm, so what should I do?”

“Can’t you do something somehow?”

Gann-san inquires with an exhausted expression but, to be honest I don’t feel like I can.

I mean, the most I can do is just try to cook the best I can.

And even that’s just casual and harmless home cooking.

I think the Roast Piglet was a little different though.

“What are they? The things that I can do”

“Let’s see. Something like becoming our hostage, and becoming a wedge to

stop the rampage of Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp or.

Using your cooking skill to act as a mediator between the two or.

Perhaps, you could marry Ekress-sama, and as a reward, the territory and the right for heir can be yielded to Ganglabe-dono *etc.*

Things like that"

"If I do that, will things calm down?"

"Around 60%. The other 40% won't be solved. Or rather, by solving the 60%, the other 40% will definitely not be solved."

"What's the 40%?"

"Sorting out the members of the mercenary corp as well as the commanders' emotions"

(TL:感情の整理, seiri is a tough word :/) Ahh, that's true.

On the business front is, the position of the Feudal Lord, the form of the reward, dealing with Newbyst, consideration for the citizens.

However, that's not the reason there will be a problem.

Emotions will come into play.

If it's Ganglabe-san and the other's then, I can imagine them saying "Don't fuck with us!" if it were to end just like this.

"However… if it'll really end 60% of the problems then, the rest might just work out somehow…."

"Is there anyone who would consent to let this scandal end by having their comrade, one of their family, someone who went through joys and sorrows together, becoming the sacrifice?

Furthermore, you are just a victim.

I think that ending this scandal by further victimising the victim is just, putting the cart before the horse"

Ugh, that's exactly right.

Indeed, even if I was to tolerate this, Ganglabe-san and the other's wouldn't

agree.

Besides, if I was to tolerate the victimising then the other person will just take advantage of me.

“Or rather, what do you really want to do, telling me those things?”

That’s the problem.

Even if you told me these things, in the end, I can’t do anything right now.

I can’t be a sacrifice.

My cooking skills too, I can’t make use of them here.

What did he want to achieve by letting someone useless like me hear the truth?

“Well…. It’s just like I said earlier, I wanted to have someone know the truth.

I wanted the people who knew about me, to increase even just by one.

Those who know about me, who has been someone behind the scenes ever since I was born, are Ekress-sama, the Feudal Lord, the legal wife and the concubine, only those four.

Is that just too little?

So I thought, ‘wouldn’t it be good if even just one more person knew’”

“Really?”

“……When I die, I want someone to mourn for me.

Most likely, I’ll die accepting all the wrongdoings.

At that time, I want you to mourn for my goodness, not my badness.”

“Like I said, why is it that you’re going to die?”

“Didn’t I already tell you? I am the Feudal Lord’s son. I’m an illegitimate son but I still have the blood of the Feudal Lord in me.

When the time comes, no, the time has already come but, if I present my head as a representative for the Feudal Lord clan, it’s possible that 80% of the problems will be solved”

“Even if I was to agree to that?”

No, I understand that even if I put in my input, it won’t solve anything.

I think even if someone like me was to say this and that here, this person will still take action in a business-like manner.

But, I can’t not say anything.

The Gann-san in front of me is saying he’ll die. I don’t want to agree and send him off without saying anything.

“Don’t look so grim”

Gann-san was, smiling.

“I’m pretty satisfied”

“Why…?”

“Somehow, I never thought that someone would stand up for me.

If I had a friend then, I had thought that it would be like this.

It sure makes me happy, you worrying about me.”

“What are you saying?”

I, had thought this since a long time ago.

“The two of us, are friends”

Eating food together, laughing together, talking together.

Isn’t that what being a friend is.

Gann-san looked as if he was surprised from the bottom of his heart.

“We’re… friends?”

“We’re friends”

“You and me?”

“Me and you”

I think we’re friends.

If not, I don’t think you would be able to speak so unreservedly like this.

“I am someone who came to live in darkness, a person of the underground.

There’s no way I can shine bright like you.

I don’t think there’s any way that sort of person can stand next to you, by your side”

“Darkness, what is it?”

Those are the words Gann-san said looking down in shame.

But, I think they’re wrong.

“This is what I think.

I think that the darkness people have, is an open hole inside the heart.

It came to be called darkness since light doesn’t reach that hole, and it’s pitch black.

However the hole in the heart is different from a wound. Even if a wound is healed, it’ll leave a scar.

A hole can be buried.

Having fun with friends, eating delicious things.

If you can accumulate happy, fun memories then that hole can be buried.

Gann-san, are you not happy?

If I appear to be bright, that’s only because your eyes are flickering under the light.”

I think that Gann-san no longer has any relation to things like darkness or light.

He is already a person who can talk to a friend like this.

He is person I can stand next to.

I think the things that are blocking his view, are just the iron bars in front of me.

“….I see. So I was already, under the light…”

He mutters lonesomely, with a fading voice.

Gann-san raises his head and looked at me.

Tears flowing, his eyes met mine.

Without even wiping away the large tears he is shedding.

“You know, I envy you.

Your cooking is good, you’re cheerful.

Even in this situation, you won’t despair.

You’re an amazing guy.

Going to a jail to eat food and laugh with that kinda guy.

I’m strange aren’t I”

“I, was envious of you.

Powerful, sturdy.

Even within a tough reality, you chose to survive.

Being able to eat food, and laugh with that kind of person.

I was happy.”

I was finally able to speak what I really thought.

Both me and Gann-san were envious of the other.

I, wanted strength.

At the mercenary corp, I can only cook; I can only watch the backs of my comrades going to war.

And even then since I can do nothing but cook, I came to be desperate.

Gann-san, wanted a normal life.

Rather than a life reeking of blood, and scheming.

He wanted an easy, foolish everyday, and peaceful days.

But even then, since he could do nothing but fight.

He became desperate, cutting open a road to live, to survive.

We both wanted, what the other had.

“I…”

“Gann-san. In your heart, is the darkness… the hole still open?”

“…..Ahh. That’s true.

Not bad. Now that you mention it, it’s true that it’s no longer there.”

“Do you want to die?”

“….I”

Gann-san. Please speak the truth.

“I want to live”

If that is your wish.

I will do whatever I can do.

Since the power I have by myself is definitely not enough.

With you and me both.

Let’s fight against this cruel fate.

This is, me and Gann-san’s, true beginning.

(Author’s note: From now on, at any time, I will update at 12am and pm!

It’s a fast pace but, I’m happy if you’ll come along with me.)

Chapter 33 - Conclusion and Motsunabe (Second Chapter)

There is no time left.

I, Ekress, has sent Gann to Shuri, and was heading to Gingus by myself.

This scandal, I must end it as quick as possible.

The reason was simple.

When I was worrying about the information was leaked by Ganglabe-dono, a letter arrived.

The sender of the letter was the famous『Gourmet Princess』, the princess of the Newbyst Royal Family. Although she is still young, she holds extraordinary talent, a genius who is deeply related to the kingdom's internal affairs.

It's from Tebis Newbyst.

She is in possession of a peculiar information network, and is extremely knowledgeable about even the affairs of foreign countries. Her network is thought to have nothing it doesn't know; that even if Gann was to investigate it, he wouldn't find anything special.

Looking at the her letter, my spine flowed with cold sweat.

According to it, the criminal that they had arrested was someone the royal family is on friendly terms with.

Therefore, they'll take procedures to take him off us.

Regarding the charges, the royal family will take responsibility and seek out the truth of the matter.

It's well worded. Despite the fact that we do not want our relation with Newbyst to become dangerous.

Newbyst is, after overcoming the war between Yuyubi, a large country which achieved rapid growth.

Food is especially excellent.

Their self-sustainability is staggeringly high, and even their ingredients are of the highest quality

And thus, now that they had received Yuyubi's mine as compensation, they realised improvements to their horse-carriages and transport mechanisms for the sake of food transportation. As a result they were able to gain wealth through food export.

Far surpassing a level of which we could ignore, before we realised, it came to the point where we had to depend on Newbyst for food supplies.

Which is why if this proposal is refused, they will probably exercise economical sanction, limit their food exports and attach a high tariff to it.

That'll make the food shortage within the territory to become even more severe, let alone becoming a terrifying blow that drags everyone down with it.

(TL: どころか泥沼化させるほどの恐ろしい一撃となる) However, what relationship does Shuri and Newbyst have?

It's not normal for a princess to personally turn up to come take away a criminal.

At first, I had thought that Shuri was a sort of spy who was working for Newbyst.

However for the sake of sorting the information, when I investigated Shuri's possessions, I understood the entire truth.

Carved onto his knife, is the crest of Newbyst's Royal Family.

His ability was recognised by Newbyst, which meant that even now he is an excellent chef they highly desire at their service.

That means that us from Sounity, had fabricated false charges and thrown such a talented person into jail.

Of course, we from the first prince's faction did not. To the bitter end it was under the leadership of the second prince's faction, Gingus. And I was working in order to free Shuri.

However those matters, are absolutely unrelated to Newbyst.

Their point will be nothing more than『The request for the person who was thought to have committed a crime, Shuri』even to the end.

That conversation has nothing to do with the truth of the crime.

Just simply, wanting the person, only Shuri.

If we yield to this then, it will affect the honour as a Feudal Lord.

If we refuse, economic sanction is waiting.

We're cornered. In order the break through this, we can only come together, sentence Shuri as innocent, set someone up to be responsible for this scandal, and work this out properly both inside and out. And then when Tebis-sama visits, we have no choice but to show that『This problem has already been resolved and the person involved has already consented』.

"This is why, Gingus. How do you explain yourself"

I was facing Gingus in his private room.

As he sat on an office chair, he was glaring at me with a sour look.

On the desk was the report with all the information I had acquired until now and the wineglass I had obtained.

Each of them, evidence, that he couldn't run away from.

"Let's stop the excuses and explanations. I want you to say the truth"

"Ah? Why do I have to say something like that to brother"

"You cannot be forgiven for having done this. As your brother, I must get to the bottom of this responsibility" (TL: 責任を精算?) "……"

"If it's now, you can still revoke your right for heir and end this matter. Newbyst has already departed for us. Finish this matter quic-…"

"Shut the fuck up!!"

Shouted Gingus all of a sudden, eyes wide open.

My body wound up stiffening due to his extremely ghastly look.

What is it, out of the blue?

"You're fucking annoying!

A woman like you pretending to be a man has no right to order me around!”

Wha….

My face went pale from surprise.

He shouldn’t have known. Because when Gingus reached the age of being aware, I had already turned into a man.

I lived without letting him know, deceiving him, behaving as his brother.

Despite that, why.

Why does he know?

“I knew. The first thing I did when I brought together my intelligence and military departments was to do a background check on older brother. When I heard the information at the time, I couldn’t believe my ears.

I didn’t want to think that the reason why I had to live as a rehash was because of my older sister who was pretending to be a man!

Was it because I was born late?

Was it because I couldn’t be relied on?

I couldn’t help but hate and hate, anything and everything!

If there’s a thing called fate then, I never thought I would be this fucking hateful!

What hate, it couldn’t be helped that I, myself was miserable!”

Gingus jumped up from his chair and punched the table.

Punching, punching, punching.

At some point, he started crying.

“Why, why is it…. Did we make a mistake somewhere….

I know…. Even that Gann is actually our brother”

…!

“I heard it when Father muttered it drunkenly….

But now, after so long, how am I supposed to treat Gann….”

“Gingus…”

“It’s already too late”

Gingus wipes away his tears, and raised his face.

“Brother, please don’t leave this room and stay here”

Gingus draws his sword from his waist, pointing it at me.

There’s no, killing intent. I think but……!

“Gingus?!”

“Ekress-sama. I want you to stay in my room.

From here on, a violent storm will be ravaging through this castle.”

“What?!”

“I called out to the commanders of Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp.

I will arrest them all in one go”

What?!

“Impossible! What would happen if you do that!

Besides, there’s also the danger that they’ll release their subordinating troops to run wild!”

“I already said, there’s no time. Brother did as well.

Securing those guys before Newbyst comes, and report that the scandal this time was their fault.

Regarding the cook, we’ll hand him over obediently”

“Even if you do that, Newbyst won’t consent!”

“They will”

Gingus picked up a piece of paper from the table.

“If my investigations are correct, Princess Tebis is infatuated with the chef. Her plans to invite him as her own imperial cook had been moving forward for quite some time now.

To that kind of princess, those other commanders are actually a nuisance.

Restraining the her favourite chef, that's their existence.

Which is why, by handing over the chef as negotiation material, the situation this time will be resolved."

"There's no way…"

There's no way something like that will go through.

Thinking about it normally, there's no way that would go through.

Even if it's true that Princess Tebis wants the chef.

Using the just chef, I don't think that it can improve the trade negotiations that will probably begin from here on.

In the first place, the reason that Princess Tebis is coming here is still to『Demand for the person, Shuri』.

We don't know if there will be trade negotiations or not, and to harm or confine the commanders of the mercenary corp for the sake of securing the chef is out of the question.

If we do that, for the sake of the thing that Newbyst wants, we'll even have to play the villain and promise to take responsibility.

If it comes to that, it's the end. Using our food trade as a shield, we don't know what unreasonable demands they might make.

If that becomes a precedent, Sounity will completely become Newbyst's puppet.

"There's no other way"

Gingus said as if to interrupt my thinking.

With a hoarse, fading voice.

"If it's brother, with your smarts then, I bet you'll think that my idea is full of holes. And even think 10 or so steps ahead.

But you see. I understand, since I can only see right in front of me.

We are trapped.

If that's the case then, no matter what we do, we will be at checkmate.

Don’t you agree?”

Yes, we are already trapped.

We have been trapped since the step when Gingus tried to hurt Father.

No, if it was then, maybe we could’ve still done something.

In the end, that kid.

The fact that we got involved with Shuri himself, it might’ve been our end.

The relationship with Newbyst.

His position in the mercenary corp.

In a place we don’t understand, we don’t know, he may have extended his hand unaware, and formed a relationship.

“It’s about time for them to come”

Gingus sheathes his sword and sat down on his chair once more.

“It’s time the commanders arrive at the castle.

No matter what brother tries now, you cannot change what happens from now on”

“Gingus….!”

“We, can do nothing but watch over the events that are to occur from here on.

Come now, you should watch too brother”

Gingus said, looking at the ceiling.

“Will it be destruction, or will it be checkmate.

Those are the ends to our fate”

Yes, there is no longer anything I can do.

I was so frustrated blood was dripping from my fists.

There is already, nothing I can do.

What should I do….!

“Now then, what do you think of this situation”

“Ganglabe. I think this is a trap”

“I, as well. This sort of letter came specifically from the guy who ordered for our house arrest. My gut tells me there has to be a catch”

“I think so too, su. From the information I grasped, I think the other side is in a rush, su”

We were holding a meeting in front of a letter which arrived at the inn.

Arranging Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corps’ contact network I, Ganglabe had decided on the likely date we were to mobilise, when I read the letter from the royal castle and was reworking on our strategy.

That letter was from the second prince Gingis Sounity and it’s contents as follows.

『I wish to consider the punishment regarding the aforementioned cook.

Not only that I order that all the commanders are to attend to the castle』

In addition to it being written in a way that looked down on us quite a bit, and even despite us being angry that the contents, how no matter how you looked at it was a trap, we were thinking that this is a good opportunity.

“Let’s think about it.

It’s true that this letter is bullshit. Imprisoning the criminal, the castle should have the full authority regarding that what to do, so it’s suspicious that they would intentionally send us a letter. It’s normal to immediately decide the punishment, then call us out to that place.

Despite showing that they want to compromise, the contents seem to want us to just barge in without thinking. It’s extremely suspicious.

Most likely, I think why the contents are like this is because they think that if they decided the punishment then told us to come, we would take action from anger.

But you see, if we go in carrying this letter then, we can enter the castle without any hesitation at all.

Let’s take this opportunity to help Shuri out of there, and escape from this

shitty territory.” (Ganglabe)

“That’s not a bad idea but, we don’t know where Shuri is held right?” (Cougar)

“They only said the dungeon after all.

It wasn’t confirmed if it was a special jail or a normal jail.

Since it’s a castle. It’s different from the guard’s cells.

Let me just say this but, we don’t know if there’s a special jail or not” (Ahrius)

“Once we get inside the castle should we erase our presence and search around together, su?” (Teg)

Teg’s suggestion is alluring but, there’s no way we can do it just like that.

“That’s dangerous Teg.

If we proceed with even one of us is missing as witnesses then, they might suspect that we left to recover Shuri.” (Cougar) “That’s true. If possible, wait for an opportunity at the conference room, then request to leave but….” (Ahrius)

Ahrius said, looking troubled as she worries.

Indeed, Teg and Ahrius’ points are valid. If even one of us is missing despite it being a gathering for everyone it’ll be nothing less than suspicious. If we wait for an opportunity at the conference room then we might be able to do something with Teg’s scouting abilities but, that’s wishful thinking.

It’s not out of the question but, it’s rather unlikely.

Trying to sort this out, we don’t know the most vital information, that is, Shuri’s whereabouts.

It can even be said that this is fatal for a rescue operation. If we don’t know the location of our rescue target then, we can’t even think to plan the route, from the rescue to the breakout.

However, thinking about it now, this is strange.

Rumours have no doors. Even if it’s a territory like this, even if it’s the castle town, from the village to the city, it’s a truth which can be applied.

At any rate, by nature humans are not tough enough to carry grave secrets.

There are those who can with training and education but, normally you'd wish to tell someone.

By the way, this isn't for the sake of adding to the argument. It's also not for the sake of passing time with the pretty girl at the bar outside of town.

In short, it's because you would want a comrade you can share such a grave secret with.

If you can't carry it by yourself then, it's fine to let others carry the burden as well. And then if the information leaks then it'll be that person's fault.

Dispersion of mental baggage. It's one of the self-defence mechanisms humans have.

Which is why, there is one answer that can be derived from this.

There is only one person in charge of actually monitoring Shuri.

That guy is manipulating all the information so that it doesn't spread outside. The opponent is quite skilled. I think it can be said that regarding information wars, that person has reached an expert level.

Most likely, it's the man Teg saw have an audience with the first prince. I think that man is an elite of their spy department although he is acting as Shuri's jailor.

Now then, what should we do.

To be honest, as long as we can end up grasping Shuri's whereabouts, we've won.

Preparation for that sake. As it were, I'm worrying over the method of information gathering.

Being limited by time, an excuse to naturally send off Teg.

As I was contemplating, the edge of my clothes was pulled.

"Hn, What's up? Riru?"

Riru lets go of my clothes and tilted her head looking curiously.

"Why are you worrying so much?"

“Because there’s no way to find Shuri’s whereabouts.

You understand right?”

“I don’t”

Riru shook her head sideways.

“Riru doesn’t think that there’s a need for complicated tactics or strategies this time.”

“Ha? That’s…”

What does she mean?

Before I could continue my words, Riru says.

“Break through the front. It’s good if we can rescue Shuri with a swift attack operation.

Contact our subordinates, if we guarantee enough members for a jailbreak then, the rest can be done with everyone’s strength like, donnn”

Riru spreads out her hands to represent the largeness of the, donnn.

However, it’s simple.

It’s simple but, kukuku.

“Haha, that’s true.

There’s no need to worry”

I once again looked at my comrade’s expressions.

Everyone was looking as if they agreed to this simple answer.

And with an impatient look as if they wanted to wreck havoc.

A swift attack operation huh.

I see, if I borrow the power of everyone here then wouldn’t we be able to get through this somehow.

The expert of the sword, Cougar cuts open a path.

The professional of archery and scouting, Teg can quickly save Shuri.

The master of magic, Ahrius annihilates the enemy.

The heaven-sent genius of magic engineering, Riru gathers attention with her inventions.

Lastly I, with my rough strategies, will rack my brain, and manage somehow.

“Ganglabe”

Now then, when I was trying think of a strategy, Riru started talking again.

“Honestly speaking Riru has a concern with the rescue operation”

“Concern? What concerns do you have with everyone here being warriors capable of matching a thousand”

“It’s about Shuri”

“Shuri? We’ll definitely save him. From those at the castle, everyone”

“If we harm the people of the castle, Shuri will definitely feel hurt”

Riru looked downwards.

“Since, Shuri is kind. Up till now, he has supported Riru and everyone with our jobs and finding solutions to whatever he could.

But, if we’re reckless with the operation this time and get hurt, or hurt the people of the castle.

I think that Shuri will definitely be hurt thinking that it was his fault”

Riru looked down, her expression as if saying of her worries and anxious feelings.

Those words, made all of us think for a little bit.

Cougar, folding his arms with a difficult expression.

Ahrius, pondering with her hand on her chin.

Teg was grimacing, looking up at the ceiling.

Similar I too, change my thoughts, thinking we have to rework the operation.

Indeed, Shuri is kind. Thinking about what to cook while worrying about us, and building up good feelings between the subordinates.

To the point where he’s too kind.

I think he’s too kind to live amongst a mercenary corp.

Even if I say that, the workplace of a mercenary corp is in the battlefield. Shuri has also accepted that. Which is why I can’t bring myself to tell him to stop.

What about this time?

If I were to say then, the battle this time can be summarised with just revenge.

The reason being arresting Shuri.

Shuri is the victim. However, what would he think if we got hurt in a fight that has nothing to do with work, if it becomes that the people in the castle die en masse, and we return to being a drifting mercenary corp?

He might blame himself thinking that it was his fault.

On the contrary, it’s also troubling what Shuri would become if he was to look straight on, as the scramble of lives is being unfolded in front of him. Even the fact that Shuri has avoided going to the front lines until now, was due to that kindness.

I have seen this countless times.

Before going out to the battlefield, that person was a nice guy. Their skill with the sword wasn’t bad, and there was no problem with their character.

However, killing people on a battlefield, the smell of blood clinging to their body, the scenes of the battlefield filled with corpses wound up burning into their brain, and that guy ended up breaking down and quit. Regarding people’s deaths, not even mentioning that our jobs are the cause. Kind people cannot come with us.

That applies even to Shuri.

Shuri is kind. Originally, he shouldn’t be in something like a mercenary corp, it would’ve been fine even if he was working at a bar in town.

However, I met him, ate his food, and thought. I ended up thinking.

That this guy is necessary for our mercenary corp.

Which is why I took him in, keeping him here.

I understand that if I really thought of him as a comrade I should’ve let

Newbyst have him.

If it’s there right now then, there’s no need to pull Shuri along to battlefields, he’ll be appointed to a high rank due to his cooking skill, it’s easy to imagine him achieving success. Safely, and at ease.

Having not done that, was my selfishness. It was just my own selfish judgment.

And that, must continue even now.

“That’s true. That guy is kind, a person who understands people’s feelings. I don’t want to show him too much of that stuff.

In that case”

In order to continue, I can only rack at my brain.

In order to protect my comrade, my family.

Making this brain rotate with all it’s power, to construct a strategy.

“Without hurting even a single person is, impossible but.

Without killing even a single person then, it’s possible somehow”

All the commanders focused at my words.

Wait for us, Shuri.

We’ll end this dispute, and go meet you!

Chapter 34 - Conclusion and Motsunabe (Turning Chapter)

“So? Have you thought of something!?”

“Not yet, but….. for now, I’ll do something about the problem in front of me!”

Hi it’s Shuri.

In order for me to do what I can, I escaped from the jail together with Gann-san’s help.

My eyes were hurting from the bright candle light but, I can’t say that kinda thing out loud.

Right now, I am running down the castle’s corridors.

Heading for the food storehouse.

The first thing I thought I had to solve was to resolve the citizen’s dissatisfaction and weakening the influence of both factions.

The reason being, limited to what Gann-san has heard, this castle should have carried in an amount of food which could be described as excessive.

I hear they serve as a reserve for the two factions, the first prince and the second prince. Since it wasn’t a place with gold, silver or jewels, it made me realise that, ‘It really is the warring period right now’.

I think that they’ve done an unthinkable thing, by buying up all the food and monopolising it despite being such a situation.

“By the way, are we, still not, at the storehouse?”

“Ahh, after going down those stairs, there’s a storehouse but….

Do you have enough, stamina?”

Yea, this is my limit.

Even though we’ve finally reached the stairs to the storehouse, my stamina is already at its limits.

I couldn’t say my complaints out loud though.

After going down the stairs, and opening the door shut with a bolt, I was taken aback.

This is ridiculous.

Without any cold air to preserve it at all, in this dusty, filthy basement, food was overflowing, piled on top of each other.

The amount of food is staggering.

Potatoes, white radish, carrots, onions….

Lumps of beef, and whole pigs etc, were placed in here.

It's just that, there were several items I don't know.

"This completely red bok choy…. is this called red choy, this?" (TL: cause bok choy is literally white cabbage, aka chinese cabbage, aka white choy, so red bok choy… hue) "That? That's a specialty you can get around here.

The sweetness of bok choy comes out when you boil it but, if you boil that, it's spicy"

S-spicy bok choy?

"What about this deep blue spring onion?"

It's not green. It's blue.

It's not the green written as in green vegetables.

It's blue. Blue like the sky.

"Ahh, sky onions huh.

Sky onions have a refreshing sourness to them.

Fundamentally it's has a medicinal taste."

M-medicinal taste….

"This, what about this super strange, bouncy, jiggly object?"

What is it, this pink slime put inside a bottle?

"That? I's nothing rare.

The entire clan of the Feudal Lord or Royalty or Nobles… well it's alcohol high

class people drink”

“A-alcohol?”

“Yea, you didn’t know? It’s just called Slime Alcohol

Cutting the stump of a Slime Tree, then further fermenting the juice boiled down from that stump, it’s a strong alcohol.

It goes down smooth, has a dry taste and the alcoholic concentration is strong.”

I’ve never heard of something from a Slime Tree….

WTF, to actually meet the peculiar ingredients of this other world in this sort of place…! Until now I had only stocked up on foods that I know, and I haven’t cooked with them before so I didn’t know. Well, maybe Ganglabe-san doesn’t really like it?

Hn? Spicy?

“This red bok choy, is it spicy?”

“Ahh, the red choy? It is. However it’s a refreshing spiciness.

It’s not the kind you eat and get disgusted with.”

Spicy…. bok choy.

There’s whole pigs, and cows here.

Also a lot of vegetables….

“Gann-san. All of these ingredients here.

Who do they belong to?”

“All of the food here, in addition to being the emergency supplies of the territory, are what the first prince faction and second prince faction have stocked up.

You see, the shelf over there and the shelf over there, they’re divided separately right?

That’s how it is”

Hmm, there are indeed shelves which have been divided strangely.

In this environment, with this much food.

I worried slightly but, I prepared myself for the worst as I can only say this straightforwardly.

“I’ll tell you straight. These ingredients.

They won’t last any longer than 3 days.”

“What? If you mean the process to prevent rotting, we do sprinkle salt on them just in case”

“It’s the humidity, temperature and dust that’s the problem.

All the ingredients up till now, how have you dealt them? Did just you eat all the supplies which couldn’t be stored anymore then and there?”

I could feel ever since coming to this basement, that the air is humid due being stored together with the soups.

The underground heat circulates, making a slightly warm room.

An environment which hasn’t been cleaned.

It really is a breeding ground for germs and bacteria. It wouldn’t be strange for everything to rot at any moment.

It’s true that if you sprinkle salt on it, it’ll preserve it somewhat.

But, there’s a limit to that right.

Such a damp, lukewarm temperature, can only be fit to breed germs….

“Change of plans.

Actually I had only planned to borrow a small amount of food from the first and second princes’ factions but.

I’ll be using all the food from both factions as well as all the emergency supplies which seem to be going bad.”

“Oi oi! What are you planning to do with so many ingredients!

Besides, what are you going to make using so many ingredients!”

“I’ve decided.

Since there's whole cows and pigs here."

"Ah, Ahh… Well, they are all here.

Literally, with all of its organs and everything but… what do you plan to do? If you dissect that and dispose of it, there'll be a considerable amount of meat"

"What are you saying.

I'll be using the organs as well"

"What?!"

"Yes, the organs, the meat, the tendons as well.

I'll be using it all"

Spicy red choy, sour sky onions.

If I make use of these, can't I make that?

A massive Motsunabe!

"Everyone, are you prepared?"

Us five commanders of Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp were standing in front of the castle gates.

Each of us have already come prepared for battle.

Cougar, as well as Teg, Ahrius and Riru.

All of us, have already entered battle mode.

We look at each other, and nod.

"Let's move"

We stood in front of the gates.

"Apologies, we were called in by the Second Prince and have arrived at the castle.

This is the letter of verification"

I hand the letter to the gatekeeper.

The gatekeeper looks at that, stiffens up for a moment, and immediately gives out instructions to open the gate.

It’s so easy to understand.

I thought without revealing my feelings.

“This way”

The gatekeeping points to the side door next to the gate.

We went through that, and then saw.

The scene of several tens of soldiers lying in wait in the courtyard, with swords drawn.

“As expected. We fell for it”

Cougar smiles, revealing his teeth.

At that time, one man approached us.

“Pardon me, Ganglabe-dono”

A man who wore a slightly imposing armour started talking.

“In accordance with Gingus-sama’s order, we shall be stopping you”

“Even if we ask for a reason?”

“There’s nothing much to tell. If I’m forced to say, it’s about the chef”

It’s going just as Cougar expected, huh.

I took a step forward.

At any rate. Information is important.

“What is the meaning of this. I was just called here since there was something to discuss.

There is no reason for us to accept this kind of unjust treatment”

I tried asking, pretending not to know anything.

Behind me, Teg tried to add something too but he was stopped by Ahrius. This guy, doesn’t seem to realise that I’m trying to gather information.

“Let us meet with the Second Prince, Gingus-sama. Where exactly is the prince.”

“I do not plan to speak. Just wait in jail”

“Is my chef there, in that jail?”

“It’s not the same place”

Hmm, it seems that he’s not in the ordinary jail.

“The ordinary jail, huh”

“Obediently come with me”

“I have something to say to Gingus-sama. Let me speak with him”

“Silence. The prince is busy”

“I understand that he is working.

However, it’s important”

“If you understand, then be quiet”

Alright, so Gingus is working.

In other words, it means to pay attention when stopping by where Gingus is working. Teg will be investigating that.

“I cannot agree at this rate.

At least let me meet with my chef”

“This conversation ends here”

“Wait!”

“You can talk later. If you want to meet with your chef then be quiet”

….So the information gathering ends here huh.

“…Guys. Exchange information”

I tell the others stealthily with a whisper.

“Gingus is in his office. Shuri is in the special jail as expected.

Arrange to confirm the ordinary jail and office. Remember the places where you could not confirm within the castle.

Operation conditions. 『Do not kill』 any of the castle guards. Show off gaudily, and make them 『Helpless』.

That is all”

“””””Understood”””””

At my instructions, the guys behind me responded.

That reply wasn’t the one we usually when we are with Shuri.

It’s the voice when we feel the atmosphere of the battlefield, when we are about to kill.

Level and plain. A voice with no emotions.

We will not forgive the enemy in front of us.

“Ahrius. Show them what you got”

“Understood”

Ahrius walks out in front of us, one step ahead.

“W-what are you doing?”

The man who came here to negotiate looked bewild.

It’s only natural. If suddenly, the arrested targets in front of you takes a stance of resistance.

However, they do not plan to let us go either.

Ahrius takes out two wands from her waist, pointing them to the sky.

“My magic, is slightly different you know?

Release Technique. 『Dominate the Airspace』”

At the same time Ahrius chants those words, a torrent of magic power overflows from within her body, dominating this whole place.

And then, that happened.

The airspace in front of our eyes, distorted slightly, becoming soft and engulfed the courtyard.

That swallows up the soldiers,

“Ka,kaha-”

“I-I can’t, b-breaaa”

“A, ga”

Suddenly, the soldiers were clawing at their mouths and throats, convulsing like they had completely drowned.

Some of them were frantic as they stood, some of them crawled on the ground, opening their mouths wide.

However, gradually the soldiers fainted.

Not knowing what she did but….

“Don’t kill them”

“Yes. I only made them faint”

Ahrius chose a suitable time at her discretion and waves her wand.

Almost all the soldiers had fainted, and the small number of soldiers who held onto their remaining consciousness, had their eyes wide open.

“Kahaa!!”

“I-I can breathe?”

“Hahii… Haa….!”

However, the complexion of the remaining soldiers is bad. I think they cannot stand up immediately at all, unable to come towards us.

“It’s best to not strain yourselves you know?”

Ahrius said, looking at the soldiers who collapsed.

Those eyes, completely lacking warmth.

It’s different from the ones she normally looks at Shuri with.

Yes, as if she was just looking at trash, a gaze of scorn.

As if to say the people in front of her are inferior to her, eyes of absolute zero.

“I have dominated this entire region’s airspace.

Do you know? If people don’t breathe in air, they can’t keep on living. In that air, there are many kinds varieties of air mixed in with it.

I took only the necessary air, and『Kept it far away』from your surroundings.

Right now, I can only manipulate to the extent of this courtyard but, eventually it's something I want to dominate all the air of the battlefield with"

I can't understand it but, in the eyes of Ahrius who had understood『Truth』, it seems that in this world there are many substances accumulating, drifting around.

Ahrius understood from within that, that when people are normally breathing, 『People need to breathe in air to sustain life』. I think it's obvious but, to seize all that air, and dominate it.

This is Ahrius,『Witch of Truth』.

"Let's go"

At Ahrius' words, we stepped towards the castle.

Going through the door which was left open, proceeding forward.

"W-wait"

Behind us, someone throws their words at us.

It was the guy who, just now, lined up a message for us.

Turning around, he was still exhausted to the point where he couldn't even stand up.

That's obvious. Since his breathing was stopped.

"I-Is that alright? If something, was to happen to your chef"

"Ha?"

I smiled evilly.

"Do you really think that you can even do that?"

The man spaced out as if he didn't understand my words.

"Your superiors didn't tell you.

Our chef, Shuri Azuma is a man who has been given a knife with the emblem of the Newbyst Royal Family carved onto it.

And he has such skill that Princess Tebis personally invited him.

The food he cooked literally made the princess' tongue moan, and thus charming her.

If you cause harm to such a talent, I think Newbyst will certainly rage.

You people, don't you know of the Tragedy of Alturia?

Over there, they had invited Shuri and received economic sanction under the effect of insult, you know? Falling into a food crisis, their food hegemony was taken from them.

The question is. Can you people do anything to him?"

The man was surprised, hesitant and then covered his face in humiliation.

There's no way you can.

There is no way one country can make enemies with, nor lay their hands on Shuri.

Although I'm not very fond of using this information I have.

Grasping and understanding information, to dominate the battlefield.

Standing on the battlefield for a moment, carrying that sword and cutting down my foes.

Good at strategies and battles as well.

That is why I am called Ganglabe,『Demon of Sword and Strategems』

Calling myself that, is rather embarrassing though.

"Let's go"

I step into the castle.

The others follow.

"It's a time to take down a castle"

Now then, come get the reward of underestimating us.

"Can you hear us, all you palace guards!!

Since you lay your hands on Shuri, we'll return that a hundred times over!

If you don't want to die, hurry up and return Shuri!"

We standing at the entrance, guards rushed out bustling.

The numbers, around twenty people huh.

It seems they don’t plan to give in to our threat.

The entrance has stairs in the center; upstairs, there are corridors continuing down left and right, and on the first floor, next to those stair was another corridor. On the floor laid a red rug, inferring that they have an unexpectedly wealthy.

The appearance of guards running out from inside the first and second floor, closely resembled ants running out from their nest.

“Ganglabe. I’ll deal with this here, su”

Teg says from behind me and, takes out a large amount of arrows from the quiver on his back.

Taking out the bow equipped on his waist, then expanding it.

This is a peculiar long bow that Riru had invented previously.

It’s a collapsible strong bow which once expanded can shoot arrows up to several hundred meters.

Opening it with just a shake of a hand, the bowstring using the techniques of magic engineering, stretches out to either end the same time it opens, forming the shape of a bow. The bowstring was said to be made from smashing magic crystals until it became powder, and seems to change the form of the string at the same time as it activates.

The strength of the bowstring was not normal, and at the current level, the only one who can use this bow was just Teg.

A plain blue bow.

That is the bow, Teg adores.

“Do you think a thing like a bow will do anything at this distance! Everyone attack together!!”

At the encouragement from presumably the Guard captain equipped with the elegant armour, twenty guards came swooping down all at once. A flood of

people. If we fight them upfront, we, only having five people would probably become pieces of meat in seconds.

However, that's if the opponents were normal.

"Such idiots, su"

Teg pulls back three arrows at once and shoots.

Three arrows accurately hit the sword holding hand of three guards.

"Gua!"

"Ouch!"

"Ugu!"

The three guards drop their swords, and fall on the spot.

However, the remaining seventeen people plunge in without a care.

Even seeing that, Teg was calm.

Once again three arrows, pulling back the bow, and shoot.

Accurately hitting three people. Once again the hand that they held their swords with.

Pull back, and shoot.

Pull back, and shoot.

Pull back, and shoot.

As if he was a carefully made doll, the figure of Teg calmly firing arrows without a change in his expressions, held a certain beauty.

Even the trajectory of the flying arrows were beautiful, hitting just once, with no errors.

Teg, without taking even a single step, continued to repeated his actions indifferently.

Suddenly, there were only two people left standing.

They were turning pale looking at the heap of guards who were squirming from the pain of the arrow stuck in their hands.

Like a nightmare.

It would scare anyone if their subordinates were made unfit for combat in a blink of an eye, unable to even come close.

“Hoi~tto”

One of the arrows that Teg released was aimed at the buttocks of the man next to the Guard Captain.

Unable to even raise a scream, the man fell to the ground.

Only the Guard Captain remained.

Teg calmly nocked in another arrow.

“It’s the last one, su”

“W-wait! Please wait! I’m just following the orders of Gingus-sama!”

“That’s even worse, su”

Hyun, reverberated the sound of the bowstring.

That arrow makes a quiet sound, stab, accurately hitting the Guard Captain’s buttocks.

“Iii,aa,aaaaa!!”

Even the Guard Captain fell to the floor at the merciless attack.

Excellent scouting technique. Presence Erasing Technique.

Above all, with his handling of a bow, the skill of always hitting as long as they are within his recognised field of vision, that ability and unshakeable nerve.

『Bow Saint』 Teg. There have even been instances he had to display the reason for why he is actually called Saint.

Storing his bow, Teg looked over here.

“Ganglabe. The path is opened, su”

“Ahh, where is Gingus’ office, I wonder”

“On the third floor, su”

“The stairs?”

“Down the right corridor on the second floor, su”

“Understood. Shall we go”

We ignore the soldiers crawling on the ground, and go up to the second floor.

Walking down the corridor, we didn’t meet a single maid.

Most likely, I think they shut themselves away in the room over there. Does that mean they sensed the unusualness outside, and took refuge immediately?

Right now it’s fine to ignore them. The goal to the very end is to rescue Shuri.

Before that I must go leave a warning for Gingus.

Making such a showy mess of things, it’s impossible that he isn’t taking action too.

It’s possible that he’ll take out Shuri as a hostage, and place him close by but, it’ll be convenient if it’s like that.

We, so that Shuri won’t be hurt at the very least, even intentionally let slip the information that Shuri has been invited by Newbyst.

It’s troubling if he doesn’t take action.

“Ganglabe”

Sst, a scabbard obstructs my advance.

Cougar draws out the scabbard, sword and all, from his waist, using it to stop me.

And then, in front of me was a brawny man.

Around the same height as me, a muscle idiot holding a battle axe.

A skinhead man wearing extra armour, stood in our way.

“Cougar”

“Got it. Something like ‘at’s my kill”

Cougar licked his lips like a snake wriggling around, returning the scabbard to his waist and went out.

Cougar takes his sword from the scabbard.

Despite that being all he did, why does it look so elegant, so beautiful, so divine.

Geez, before I realised, he ended up being so much further ahead of me.

“You, are you the strongest person here?”

“That’s right. Even amongst the troops that Gingus-sama leads, I am the strongest”

“Hou. Then you saying that you confident with your skill right?”

“Of course. Don’t compare with the trash up till now.

Now that this Adora-sama has come out, you shall die here”

“Isn’t it, arresting?”

“You’ve been so rude until now.

I think you can leave behind an arm or two.”

“Bring it on”

Cougar prepares his sword.

It’s the stance for Juugen Style (TL: Soft sword). I’ve seen it before on the battlefield.

With a peculiar stance, both feet at shoulder width, with his heels at half-rise, the left slightly bent behind the other foot, slanting as if aiming at the opponents gaps in the ribs with his sword.

According to the person himself, he can retreat and advance, so it appears to be a stance suitable for piercing through the gaps of armours.

Sliding forth, Cougar takes a step forward.

Their distance between each other was about three meters. Thinking about this normally, the man who calls himself Adora or such with his huge body and battle axe has distanced himself well. The one who has air superiority, is probably Adora.

However, Cougar doesn’t need any of those kind of handicaps.

At least he isn’t shaking or anything.

With his impressive stance, he doesn’t waver.

That is a type of praying stance.

Offering to the goddess of victory, the figure of an earnest swordsman’s limits.

“I shan’t kill you. However, lose severely for me”

“Shut up!!!”

Adora kicks off from the floor and closes in to Cougar.

A quickness unimaginable from his huge body.

Adding to that speed, he brandishes his battle axe above his head, and swung it down as if to smash Cougar.

The muddy stream of steel blue became a waterfall of death, and Cougar steps slightly to the right.

Dodging it by the hair.

The battle axe that crashed into the ground, tore up the rug, smashing the floor, piercing into it.

However, Adora is also a top-class warrior.

Using the momentum which would normally give birth to an opening, he shift his weight slightly with his right ankle in order to make himself rotate, turning his entire upper body around.

The battle axe changes it’s course as if rebounding off the ground.

Aiming for Cougar’s flank at a terrifying speed.

However, Cougar is another top-class swordsman as well.

Receiving the battle axe, with his sword held vertically.

I think normally the sword would break and Cougar’s body would be cut in two as well.

Cougar is aware of that as well.

It’s exactly because he’s aware that, he is able to seamlessly perform his next actions.

Manipulating the sword which had vertically received the attack, making the battle axe's trajectory change to the sword's direction as if sliding right off.

The direction of the sword. From vertical, changes to horizontal above the head.

Meanwhile, the path of the battle axe could not even resist, as if that was the designated path from the beginning.

Due to his perfect footwork, it had only cut through air.

"Wha-"

"Soft Sword Style『Willow Stream』"

According to what Cougar says, the world is filled with streams of force.

Those streams of force, to see through those waves and manipulate it, that is《Willow Stream》.

Actually, I too had experienced that technique but, that was amazing.

That sight was almost as if the sword he swung made Cougar's body dodge by itself, because the edge of the axe came down without even grazing Cougar's body.

Dodging, dodging, dodging.

Cougar gradually changes from holding his sword with two hands to one hand, and continues again.

Looking at it, I can only think that it's hilarious.

Since a large man, with all his power, was being parried by a delicate looking man one head shorter than him.

Before we realised, Cougar had also lowered his hand which was holding the sword.

"Y-you bastard!!"

Adora looks angry.

Yes, at Cougar.

Since he is dodging the axe barehanded.

“No way, that’s amazing, su!”

Teg looks on next to me, eyes sparkling. Ahrius is also surprised.

Riru was expressionless as always. I don’t know what she’s thinking.

“You think so? As long as you practise, anyone can do it eh”

Cougar casually replied to Teg’s comments.

That attitude as well, was getting on Adora’s nerves. He raises the speed at which he swings his axe but, even to that Cougar copes with it perfectly.

It’s easier said than done.

He is only lightly brushing it away, avoiding the orbit of the handle and back of the axe, using that is, his arm and hand. Or floating on and striking at the ground? Supporting it only with a trick like floating in the air.

However, the level of what he did is far greater.

I think if he made a mistake with one step, he would say goodbye to his head and torso. Looking as if he was playing on the point of life and death half for fun.

Despite all that he survives, his concentration uninterrupted.

A technique in this left hand. This is the true form of Soft Sword Style’s《Willow Current》.

The ultimate form of a defensive technique.

The mental state Cougar has reached seems to be far higher up in the skies than I had imagined.

Which is why, he is reliable.

Even now, Cougar doesn’t discontinue his training.

Wholeheartedly continuing to polish his techniques, body and heart.

Overwhelming others with that sword, for the sake of protecting his friends, slaughtering any and all enemies before him.

『Sword King of Hundred Kills』 Cougar, that is the name of the man I rely on.

Gradually Adora’s face showed signs of fatigue.

Not just fatigue. Humiliation and an expression of his heart fracturing.

Looking carefully, it's become even more impressive, as Cougar is dodging using the palm of his hands.

It's a finger. He is parrying using two of the fingers on his left hand, his index finger and middle finger.

"Damn…. it!!!!!"

He risks it all. The axe was swung cutting straight down.

It could be said that it's the final attack, an attack mustered with all his strength.

Cougar brought his left hand up.

And then, didn't parry or dodge.

Don! Rang the impacting sound.

It indeed should have been an attack which tears through skin, crumbles bones and severs arms.

However, there was nothing, on Cougar's face.

No pain, nor anguish.

And, his left hand.

Couldn't be sliced off at all.

His section of the arm hit the axe, stopping it without even granting one sheet of skin to be sliced.

"Hard Sword Style『Hikai』(TL: 否塊 - idk, Cluster Refusal?) Squeezing and tightening the flesh to its limits for an instant, a technique neither blades nor arrows can pass through.

Ideally it would be good if I 'as able to do it with my entire body though. Right now I can still only do it with my arm"

"No, being able to do it is already strange"

Ignoring my rebuttal, Cougar casually brushes off his arm.

The action should have been nothing special for a big man like Adora but,

Adora ends up stumbling and falling down on his back.

On that face was an expression like a child who had their spirits crushed.

Even the attack he had absolute confidence in, to the reality that it didn't even yield a single injury, Adora has died.

That is, his confidence as a warrior.

I don't think Adora can fight any longer. Since his heart which been thoroughly crushed, never again recovering to what it used to be.

"So, I'll be passing through here but, is that aigh't with you?

You understand that even if you continue this it's useless, right?"

At Cougar's question, Adora could only nod.

No matter what he did, even if he was to resist here uselessly here, he was no match for this man.

He understood that whether it's talent or hard work, he could not reach Cougar level.

He can no longer fight, I think.

What a pity.

Even through until he had met Cougar, the man named Adora was a good soldier, his confidence and ability in harmony.

Being helpless in both talent and hard work, as a result of having met a strong person with absolute strength, Adora was crushed.

"So he says Ganglabe.

Let's go"

"Right"

We go pass Adora's side, and walk down the corridor.

Adora did not move at all, not even at that time.

No, I only saw that he was hanging his head down in shame, crying.

Well, it means nothing to us.

“…..”

Advancing down the corridor, suddenly Riru turned around.

Opposite the corridor, I could see the path we were to go through.

“What’s wrong, Riru?”

“It would be annoying is nuisances got it here”

Nuisances?

“Is somebody coming?”

“From what I can hear, there are countless footsteps far away but. They won’t be here for a while, su.

Perhaps, maybe they’re gathering up numbers, su”

“Riru, was that what you heard?”

“Uun”

Riru shakes her head and denied.

“I was just, thinking about after this”

“Aaah… so that’s what you mean”

We’ll be facing Gingus from here on. And with hostility too.

At that time, it’ll be annoying if something like guards or anything come in and interrupt.

“Which is why, it’s time for a wall”

Riru raises her leg and stomped on the corridor with all her strength.

Doing so, from her feet, shines a light of a Magi Spell, going down the corridor.

Around three meters away from us, there’s a protrusion in the corridor, distorting even the ceiling.

The corridor was blocked up right after.

The corridor had become crooked, it had already become so ridiculous that not even a single person could pass through it.

“With this, no one can go through”

“Oi oi, what do we do when we go back?”

“According to the information, we can get back by taking a long detour from here. Besides if you have Riru, there’s no problem since we can come back here again and fix it”

Said Riru naturally with no hesitation at all.

I quietly whispered into Ahrius’ ear.

“If it’s you, can you do the same thing?”

“I should be able to if I try but, I can’t be as precise as Riru. It might be much more crooked than this and there may even be a gap where people can go through.

Above all else, the magic power consumption is severe”

Most likely, I think those shoes have a device set up in them. And in addition to that, I understand that it’s an item which has gone through many adjustments and repeated research.

Not just that.

Naturally our equipment as well but, Riru’s equipment is outstanding.

Inside the white coat she is wearing, so many Magi Spells were written in it that it’s absurd to even count. Their effects were an array of Durability, Blade Resistance, Pierce Resistance, Fire Resistance, Cold Resistance, Waterproof and Defensive Ability. The clothes and pants had the same abilities, and when it comes to the shoes, they lighten ground operations, can harden, and are attached with devices that I just want to ask, ‘Where did these legendary equipments come from’.

All of these are made according to Riru’s first-class good’s development. Of course Teg’s bow as well.

『Genius Inventor』 Riru. An indispensable existence for our party.

Us five. If each of us, with each of our strong points work together, it’s proof that we can even take down a castle.

However, it’s no good if it’s just us.

“Teg. Where’s Gingus’ office?”

“It’s at the end of the corridor ahead, su”

If it’s the five of us then, we can even survive on the battlefield.

However, we are a group which are hopeless at other things. With just that, we cannot function as a mercenary corp.

Further strengthening our bonds, able to protect the circle called a mercenary corp, the one behind the scenes.

A warmth, giving us the joy of having survived.

Being together with comrades, teaching us happiness is natural.

Shuri, as expected you are an indispensable existence to us.

Which is why, from here on we’ll be coming to save you.

Having this determination in my chest, I stood in front of the door at the end of the corridor.

It didn’t take that long to get here. Precisely a swift assault, don’t you agree.

“Let’s go”

As if telling myself, I opened into Gingus’ room.

The people inside were, Gingus, and the girl I had heard just by name, Ekress.

I see, indeed crossdressing. If I wasn’t told, I might see her as a gender neutral pretty boy.

Gingus looked surprised. As did Ekress.

“Ganglabe……!”

“Sup Gingus-sama. Hey, I came as written in your letter”

I don’t think there’s any need to speak politely anymore. I speak casually.

“How did you get…. what happened to the guards!”

“We mowed everyone down and came all the way here.

It was pretty easy ya know? I could even say I passed through without stopping.

Even the soldier that you trained, was unexpectedly nothing special”

Of course, that was half true, half lies.

It was indeed an easy win but, that’s only because I was together with these guys.

Naturally, I don’t plan on telling them the truth.

Despite saying the truth, it’s ambiguous as if it could be explained with good luck.

This is also a type of negotiation technique.

Gingus’ expression changed from anger to one of resignation.

“Brother. This is already the end.

I never thought they could actually come all the way here, mowing down all those soldiers”

“Right~.

Now then, won’t you report the truth of the matters to the Feudal Lord.

Also, your tongue better tell him the truth.

I have a general idea of what happened, and we are holding onto information as well.

Don’t think your lies will pass”

“……Right about now, Father is probably being confined in his private room because of Ore-sama’s private soldiers. (TL: Ore-sama conceited way saying I/me: Gingus) There’s already nothing to say at this point.

You can kill me or fry me all you like”

Gingus takes out the sword from his waist, and cast it away in front of us.

He’s clumsy but, he’s holding a good sword. The clarity of the blade is beautiful, it’s quite the sharp sword huh.

He casts it away, sending it over here.

….It’s not a trap. Even after I exchange a look with Teg, I can’t sense a trap.

Which means there's no trap here.

"You're the son of the Feudal Lord but, you'll actually confine the Feudal Lord.

You don't want to live?"

The opponent, a father, despite being a relative, is the governing head of this territory.

To confine such a person, it's impossible for him to get off scot-free.

Including the earlier scandal, despite knowing the Feudal Lord's body condition, the deed of handing over a wineglass amounting to poison, considering that, he can not escape from the death penalty.

The possibility he can have a chance at his future is extremely low, it's a thorny path.

"Why were you such a stickler for the position of the Feudal Lord.

Thinking about it normally, I think you should understand that if your older brother can manage the domestic affairs, and if you can manage the army, it'll bring great benefits to this territory.

If the both of you each realise you're both cut out for different things, and support each other, at the very least I don't think it would've come to such a situation."

I say it like that myself but, I'm thinking that such a thing is almost impossible.

To become a Feudal Lord means you can gain the rights to control the officials, as well as the army.

Because of that, Gingus who has been educated with regulating the army becomes a『Manage for Hire』.

His pride as well as his passion, is no different from anything else『that can be raised』. (TL: 全て『飼われている』のと変わらない) Above all however, people want to aim for the top, and can't throw away the desire for improvement.

All the more, when it comes to being a noble. They want more wealth, more authority, more large plots of land.

I'm like that. I want to obtain a country. I wholeheartedly fought all the way

here for that.

However because someone like me spat out those words, it shouldn't get through to Gingus.

Fu, in the first place, I'm actually spitting out such remarks.

This is also because I got involved with Shuri.

His kindness has even slightly infected me, huh.

"Actually I think you understand as well, Ganglabe"

Gingus said as he laughed.

A scorn, that wasn't even directed at me, but at himself.

"In the end, Ore-sama is also a stupid man who drowned in authority.

Aren't you like that too? You want authority. You want wealth. Which is why you're leading a mercenary corp, wandering from one battlefield to the next, gaining money at the price of your subordinate's lives right?"

Twitch, I felt Ahrius' atmosphere change.

Even though I was irritated first, damn it.

If you do it before me, I hafta stay calm.

If I get angry together with my subordinates, it won't be a conversation.

"That's how it is. Ore-sama was just a greedy person.

The conversation comes to here. Hurry up and kill me"

"I refuse"

What? Gingus' looked with a dubious expression.

"We have vowed not to kill anyone, until we save Shuri.

I won't kill you either. I won't kill your brother next to you either. Nor the Feudal Lord, nor your subordinates.

That is our resolve"

"Ha!! After so long you still want to avoid responsibility to be seen as good people!"

“Wrong.

We won’t kill for Shuri’s sake”

“What…..?”

“Take it as you will. If we came all the way here making a blood path, we wouldn’t be able to meet eye to eye with that guy.

When that guy comes with us, we won’t leave behind even a single drop of blood on this path.

That’s all there is”

“There’s no way you can do a thing like that, right.

When has Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp, known across the world, come to say such lukewarm words”

“Ever since we met that guy”

Yes, its because we met that guy, that we could come all the way here.

That guy who would never say in front of everyone that he wants to go home.

That guy who would would only shed tears and spill his feelings of nostalgia when his crying, sick in bed.

Which is why, we, who have restrained him until now, can only do this much.

At the very least, I think I want to protect that much.

“….Ha, if that’s the case I don’t care anymore”

Gingus took out a short sword from his waist.

Since it’s a type of ceremonial sword, I wasn’t on guard but, why here?

“I should be the one to decide how I end”

With a quick action, he stabs at his throat with the ceremonial sword.

Then pulled it out in go.

“…..-!!!”

Fresh blood scatters.

Fluttering, it scattered onto the floor.

Spreading a red stain.

Gingus was surprised.

If he thought that he had cut open his own throat.

It was very close.

Because Ekress had defended it, with her hand.

“….Brother, why”

Absentmindedly, Gingus dropped the ceremonial sword, and asked Ekress.

There was a deep injury in her hand, I think.

Making a large wound, overflowing with blood from her palm to her upper arm.

However, Ekress didn’t even raise a sound, not even at the pain.

Just looking straight at Gingus.

“Kill yourself, doing something as stupid as killing yourself, it’s idiotic!”

Ekress shouted.

“In the first place, this has been mistake ever since Father made me out to be a man, trying to manage somehow.

The dissatisfaction and anxieties piled on and on but, if it had tormented Gingus then.

That is my and Father’s fault.

It’s not Gingus’ responsibility to bear.

If it turns out Gingus receives the death penalty then.

I’ll take the death penalty in your stead.”

“Ha?! There’s no way you can right!”

“I can if I report myself as the offender for this time’s matter to Newbyst, and let the citizens know.

Even regarding Father, I can just say he threatened me.

It’s alright. No matter what happens.

I'll protect you."

"Why!"

"I'm your older brother… no"

Ekress, laughed.

"Older sister that's why…. I guess"

At those words, Gingus stiffened up.

Stiffening up, without moving.

Just, crying.

"You stupid idiot…."

Gingus says that and tossed the ceremonial sword in front of me.

And then, stands in front of me and said.

"Ganglabe-dono. The impoliteness this time, I beg of you to forgive me.

It's clear as day that your side will be unable to bury the hatchet. I understand.

As an apology, please convict Ore-sama…. me with that ceremonial sword of mine.

Whether you want to kill me or torment me, I don't mind whatever you do to me"

"You…"

I felt so angry that veins came out to my temple.

Does he think that if he suddenly takes up an admirable attitude he'll be forgiven? This brat.

"I understand. That there's absolutely no meaning to an apology like this"

"If you understand, then why!"

Behind Gingus, Ekress shouted.

"It's no good if you die! You still have to live!

If you die, the army will rampage!"

“That’s true. However, I cannot think of another method of resolving this other than this.”

“I didn’t come here to fuck around!”

I hold back the feelings I want to scream out, squeezing it out slowly.

“I came here, to take back Shuri without killing anybody. I will not stand for letting this mission fail just to kill you at the very last moment”

“Nevertheless, there is nothing else I can do, other than this”

“Wait!”

Ekress thrusted herself in between me and Gingus.

Spreading her arms, Ekress stands as if protecting Gingus behind her, staring right at my eyes.

Trying to save her one and only little brother, she looked like an older sister.

“I will give scold and punish Gingus. I’ll also return Shuri-kun. I’ll even hand over reward money as well as items, and land.

If that isn’t enough, I’ll even award you a medal.

Please. Just don’t kill Gingus please.”

“You, you wanted to try run away with Shuri right”

Ekress stiffens up at my words.

“Saying that you didn’t want to be the heir, you wanted to take Shuri and try to run away right”

“T-that’s”

“That sort of person’s excuse is not trustworthy huh”

“I-indeed, I didn’t want to succeed in something like territory.

I took efforts in order to yield this all of this territory, in it’s entirety, without problems, to Gingus.”

“Older brother…?”

“….It’s true Gingus. I didn’t have any plans to become the heir.

Even the gathered food, was to be split with the citizens at a suitable time.

Since if the entire Feudal Lord's clan was to monopolise the food, the rebellion from the citizens would be terrifying.

Thus, I had gathered our wealth in order to divide it"

"If it's like that, the meaning of the things I did…."

"No, whether you were just pretending or was serious, you have to take that kind of attitude. If you don't, you can't sustain your faction, inviting the distrusts of subordinates.

There is no need to say it's meaningless"

"But"

"You were seriously thinking about this territory. I was, just being your support"

"Oi, don't change the subject"

Since they tried to derail the conversation path, I pressure them.

Ekress, I can't be careless of this guy.

It's best not to underestimate her ability that had operated the internal affairs until now.

"It seems what I want to say is, 'Return Shuri'.

We've complained about this and that up to here but, that's all we want.

We don't want your apologies *etc.*

But, if you are to apologize, pay that apology with something that has form.

That is, territory, gold or whatever.

After all, we had become criminals, been confined, and had our comrade arrested.

If you are to apologize then do it with something appropriat-"

"There's no neeeeee~d for that!!"

It was then.

All of a sudden, a clear voice resounds through the room.

Opening the door, that guy, literally came tumbling inside, appearing in front of us.

It was the guy we wanted to meet.

Having been separated for so long, we were thinking about the best way to rescue him.

Without that guy, we are extremely troubled.

An important subordinate, comrade, family.

Shuri Azuma appeared in front of us.

“This is the end of the fight!”

Chapter 35 - Conclusion and Motsunabe (Resolution Chapter)

Let’s go back in time a little.

I gather a lot of the necessary ingredients from the storehouse, and carried it into the kitchen.

80% of it was entrusted to Gann-san. Me? I have no strength….

“And, what are you planning with this.

With this mountain of ingredients, how do you plan to use it all up?”

While Gann-san is carrying the ingredients, he asks me.

“That’s true. I had thought about this”

I was gathering up all the pots, which I could be called pots.

“I said this earlier as well but, first we must weaken the power of the two factions.

Carelessly expanding their conflicting power, in the end, can only be poisonous to that territory or country.”

At any rate, it’s due to both factions both wanting authority and running wild.

If we just leave them be, they would both indiscriminately covet each other’s assets, and that land will end up drying up.

“Due to that, both of them need to spit out all the items they have stocked up.

As a form of charity to the citizens.”

“Will something like that go well?”

“If Gann-san has doubts about it then, perhaps it might not go well”

Since I don’t understand things like political trickery and schemes.

“But, the best I can do is just cook.

Using the momentum of spitting out all the stored up ingredients, and donating it to the citizens”

“However….”

“If this was gold, silver or jewels then I couldn’t have done anything.

However, it’s fortunate that the kind of assets hoarded away were ingredients”

Given that I have no aesthetic sense, it’s not like I could judge the jewels.

“But, where there are ingredients, that’s where my battlefield lies.

It’s my fight from here on”

Yes, if the stage is cooking then, that is where I fight.

Turning the ingredients in front of me into weapons, to fight straight on with the people eating is my role.

“Besides, if this much was hoarded up, the people in the castle town would also be hungry right?

Let’s make them happier by eat something delicious, like Paa~, with the things around here”

“….Understood.

So, what should I do?”

“Then…. please wash this”

I quickly handed the pig entrails to him.

The moment he saw that, Gann-san was very surprised.

How surprised? He literally jumped.

“Isn’t, isn’t this organs! What about the meat!”

“Eh? We’ll use the meat as well but, we’ll also use the organs. Where I was from, it’s called entrails though.”

“Are you stupid! Things like organs just stink!

Think this through!”

“That’s why if you don’t wash it…. Ah, once you’ve washed it, please remove all of the moisture properly. The reason the organs smell is because of the moisture collected inside the organs.”

“Eh, gu, da, damn it…. alright….”

Carrying the pots with a mountain full of entrails, Gann-san reluctantly started washing.

Although it’s troubling that he’s surprised by entrails…. I mean, in a certain country, they actually eat dogs, even scorpions and geckos….. They had medicinal effects though…..

Now then, I’ll leave him to his business over there. First, I have to make the stock.

The concept this time is, a piquant Motsunabe.

Using the spicy red choy, I’m thinking of making a lot of stimulating hot pots.

The number of pots we collected as well might be considered idiotic. I’ll be roughly using over a hundred huge, enormous pots.

The cabbage, bean sprouts and chives have been secured as well.

Given that this time I’ve prepared a substitute for bok choy, red choy, it should be reasonably delicious.

Truth be told, I want an Asian flavoured stock base like miso or gochujang but, since there isn’t any here I’ll make do with something else. There’s no soy sauce either. I wonder if it’ll work with fish sauce? Just in case, but I’ll use spring onions to get rid of the smell just like last time….

(TL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gochujang)

Preparing the ingredients, there is something I have to make beforehand.

Chicken broth.

There is a huge difference whether this is in it or not.

If possible I want to make it in a western style but, I shift to Japanese style since I can’t find any celery.

Pre-cooking a whole bird. I pour a large amount of water into the pot, heat it, and then put it in.

It’s boiling well. I take it out once the colour changed, this time cutting it up. It’s OK once it’s been split into three.

Taking those and slightly cooking those with the leftovers. Cooking it fragrantly, giving it colour, replace the water in the pot, then add the bird, scallions and alcohol and boil them together Remove the scum when it comes out, and keep repeating.

“Oiiii….. I washed them….”

“Ahh, thank you. Are you tired?”

“It’s my first time, washing organs….”

“I’m sorry.

Then, please put all of these vegetables into the pot”

“Hah!? Did you prepare all these vegetables all by yourself!?”

“I’ve been making large portions for quite some time now after all, in our mercenary corp.

You get used to this much”

We made food for close to a thousand soldier-san’s, with just five people.

It’s not strange for my preparation skills to have gotten better.

“….And, it’s about time huh”

After boiling it for close to an hour, I filter it with a clean cloth, this time I add in kelp and boil it for a short while.

With this the Japanese Style Chicken Broth is complete.

“Gann-san, have you finished?”

“Ahh, I’ve tossed the vegetables in, even though the pot looks like this”

“Please be careful about the amount of red choy.

Since I don’t know how spicy it is, it’ll be bad if we put in too much”

“O-ohhh. Understood”

Gann-san, I can hear you you know, grumbling and muttering “I didn’t hear about this…. is this alright”.

I took a glimpse but, uh, there’s a lot.

There’s too much red choy so it’s completely red.

“Gann-san, excuse me for a bit”

I take one of the red choy, holding one of the ends in my mouth.

“Un…. It’s not too spicy. Sweet spicy? I guess”

It feels like the sweetness of a boiled bok choy and the slight spiciness of a capsicum.

If it’s like this then it wouldn’t matter even if he puts in a lot.

“The problem is the colour change but….”

As an experiment, I put it in a pot which had been boiled and left alone, and heated it up.

“….There’s quite a lot….”

It’s completely red.

The colour changes more than I had imagined. This is… even if there isn’t much of a hot taste, the visuals appear to have wound up coming out bad….

“Excuse me, Gann-san. Please slightly decrease the amount of red choy”

“Is the spiciness alright I wonder?”

“The problem is the colour. The colours changed more than I thought.”

“Who cares about something like colour?”

Ohhh, is that how you speak about cooking?

“Where I’m from, there were indeed shops where the dishes were completely red and spicy to draw in customers but…. Well, it’s popular due to its spicy appearance, and its amazing taste.

This is a hot pot dish which everyone can eat after all. So if it looks bad, they might not eat it”

“Is that so?”

“I’ll ask but, do you want to eat a dish that’s completely red?

So red that even the ingredients, the broth, even the rim of the bot is red. I

would want to decline.”

“…. That’s true”

“I’ll be teaching you from now on so, please remember this ok”

“O-oh! Understood!”

“Well, this time sort out the offal, and let’s add it to the pot”

Because if we don’t hurry, it’s easy for the various organs to go bad.

In addition it had been placed in its entirety in that sort of place.

“Please add some here”

“Oh…. can we really eat it? Hearts and lungs and….”

“You’ll understand if you eat it”

This person, don’t be so reluctant….

By the way this time, thinking of its condition, I’ve pre-processed the organ meat.

Putting it in boiling water then cooling it with water.

It’s like the Chinese Style of boiled pork, Plain Boiled Pork.

Using boiling water to kill the bacteria. Killing it thoroughly.

Then, putting the meat, organs and vegetables in the pot, I add the chicken broth and fish sauce, and simmer.

Once it’s simmered, sprinkle chives around and it’s finished.

“It’s….red huh”

The red choy brought out more colour than I had thought. It’s really red.

I sample it timidly.

Un, it’s not that bad.

The stink of the fish sauce is held down to a certain degree, and the spiciness of the red choy is just right.

I see, so the taste becomes like this.

As a test, I pick up a red choy and try it, I see, the spiciness of the faded red choys is light, and has a sweetness like that of bok choy.

Perhaps, the spiciness was in the colour itself, so do doesn't that mean after boiling it, and making it lose colour, it's no different from bok choy?

It doesn't feel like its losing flavour at all.

This is similar to Kimchi Motsunabe, ne.

"Gann-san, try some please. Together with the offal"

"Eh? No, just the vegetables"

"Well well, don't be shy!"

Suddenly, I forcefully stuffed an entire organ meat into Gann-san's mouth.

"Huff, huff!

A, fu.

….It's good. What's this called? I had thought that there would be an organ stink but there isn't.

The spiciness is just right and the soup, dissolved with the flavours of the vegetables and bird is irresistible.

The offal was good too. It has a peculiar texture, and has a deliciousness unlike that of meat.

It's rubbery and firm.

This is good"

"Right? You can't make fun of the internal organs either, right?"

"Ahh. So much so I wonder that it's strange why I haven't eaten this earlier."

"It goes bad easy, and normally you wouldn't think to eat it right"

After all, Intestines go bad easy.

It'll go bad in one or two weeks.

Everyone as well, I recommend you eat it early before it goes bad or cook it thoroughly.

“Is it alright to eat a bit more?”

“No. Let’s finish everything”

I won’t allow you to eat it all for sampling.

While I was keeping an eye out so that Gann-san isn’t stealing food, I continue working.

Since I’ve got the hang of the combination of the chicken broth and red choy, the work progresses quickly.

However, because the chicken broth turned out better than I had thought, it seems like my freedom of cooking will also expand from now on.

『Rather than the freedom of cooking, freedom of Hamburg!』

Hah! Did I hear that correctly!?

“Gann-san, did you say something?”

“Er, it wasn’t you who said it? Something about Hambagu or something”

It wasn’t my imagination?!

As a result I advanced through work quickly, albeit slightly nervous.

“Finished~!!”

A hundred large pots of Motsunabe is finished.

Wow, I really can do it when I put my mind to it.

“My arms…. my feet…. my back, they hurt….!!”

Although that’s what Gann-san thought next to me.

“If you’re this disheartened then, you won’t be able to be a chef.

Originally you’d have to start from the preparations of the ingredients.”

“Cooking is tough”

“But it’s interesting”

I grinned nihilistically.

“Gross”

It was a critical hit.

Despite becoming a little down, I completed the finishing touches.

Putting on the pot lid, it was the discussion concerning to which areas we should place these.

It was then.

I could hear a racket from far away.

“? What’s that?”

“This is…. unless!”

Gann-san’s complexion changed, rushing out into the corridors.

And then, he returned after a little while, to tell me with a pale face.

“Terrible! Ganglabe and the others came to attack!”

Ehh?

“What do you mean? Has Ganglabe-san and everyone come?”

“Ahh, actually I heard that Gingus-sama was calling for Ganglabe and the commanders.”

“Really?!”

“Ahh, I didn’t hear the reason. Sudden, without giving a reason, he sent them a letter. I also heard after it had happened but, I never would’ve thought we’ll be attacked instead!”

No, somehow on the contrary it’s as expected.

It seems like something Ganglabe-san would do.

“And, the people in the castle are defending?”

“Ahh. However not even one person has died. Why? Why are they advancing without killing anyone?”

Gann-san was pondering but, I understood somewhat.

Perhaps, aren’t they taking me into consideration?

To be honest, while I was in the mercenary corp, I haven’t seen a dead body.

I understood that Ganglabe-san was trying his best so that I wouldn't have to see a dead body.

Well, even I've seen a corpse when I attended my relative's funeral.

But I've never seen a murdered corpse which had just died. It's natural though.

Thinking that if he shows me a corpse, I'll become afraid.

"Gann-san. Can you predict where Ganglabe-san is heading?"

"Probably Gingus-sama's place. Right now Ekress-sama should be there too.

What are you planning?"

"Let's end this mess.

If they know that I'm alright then they won't have any reason to fight"

Since I don't have even a single wound, nope.

"Will it work out somehow if you go?"

"It'll have to somehow.

I have to do something before that Gingus-sama makes Ganglabe-san angry."

I place a lid on the last pot and faced Gann-san.

"Let's go. Please guide me"

"Understood….

Since you seem determined. I think it's useless to even stop you.

Except, do not leave my side. Since I don't know what might happen"

"I understand"

We rush out into the corridor, and started to run towards Gingus-sama's office.

Along the way, there were injured people everywhere….

Not one of them is dead but, amongst all the people who were finished with just a light wound, there were also people whose wounds have turned out to be quite severe.

It was a scene that let me understand just how angry everyone was.

Even without killing, without inflicting severe wounds, it’s clear that they are making them receive punishment.

It’s a little scary.

“Shuri, this isn’t your fault”

That’s when Gann-san said as he runs in front of me.

Without turning his face, without losing his breath.

“All of this is our just desserts.

The punishment for being greedy. It’s not something you should bother yourself with”

“Is that so…”

Even if you say that….

“Ahh, damn! Shuri, let’s go a different route!”

“Eh?”

After thinking deeply for a bit, Gann-san stopped.

Looking in front of me, there was something amazing.

It was the corridor but, it was blocked with a twisted path.

Literally, 『Twisted』, desu. It was as if the entire room was twisted with a screw, the remnants of overwhelming destruction.

Couldn’t this be art instead?

“It’s them!

Most likely, so that the pursuers can’t follow them, they blocked the path!”

“Going so far, is this normal?”

“No! This is, for present magic and magic engineering is a super difficult technique, it’s not something that’ll make its debut in this sort of place!

This is just how angry they are!”

Uwahhh….

“Am I, popular?”

Gann-san facepalmed.

“Stop saying stupid shit and let’s go a different route!”

“A different route?”

“It’s a detour!

Let’s temporarily go back and go to the Feudal Lord’s office, and then go up the emergency stairs in front of that!

Shit, it truly is a detour!”

“Please wait a moment”

There was a word I couldn’t ignore.

“Speaking of which, what are the chief vassals and Feudal Lord doing?”

“Ah? Well probably hiding in a room something?

Taking refuge or something”

Refuge….

“You said that Ganglabe-san and everyone was called by Gingus-sama right?”

“Ahh, that’s right but….”

“Why did he call them?”

“Well, to hear about your scandal”

Here, Gann-san stopped.

“Yes, rather than the timing being unnatural, it could be said that he can only call them here.

Soon Princess Tebis will come from Newbyst. Once Tebis has come, there might be a sanction due to trade reconsiderations. Using the fact that you were arrested unfairly.

Before that, did he plan to capture the commanders and hand you to Newbyst?”

“Is there any meaning to that?”

“Almost none. All the other side demands is『Your person』after all. Even if we

are preventing the『Trade reconsiderations』ahead of time, there's no meaning if the other side does not make use of that card.

Rather, if we were to suddenly to use that card then,『With the degree that you have harmed a chef on friendly terms with Newbyst, you are taking political action?』and make them angry instead. They can end up using『Insult』as the excuse to sanction us.

That sort of thing, there's no way the Feudal Lord would"

Once again, Gann-san made a face like he had realised something, and changed into an expression of anger.

"I see, he's being confined!

If a feudal lord's son, regardless of if he's the father, confines the feudal lord then, he can't escape the death penalty!

He took the worst possible action!"

"Worst, is it?"

"Yes, he can't escape death and by doing this, the citizens might misunderstand it for a coup d'état, and the inside of the territory will be in chaos!

What to do….! Would it be better to release the Feudal Lord and the other's first? Or is it better to stop Ganglabe?"

"I understand"

Since I finally understand the flow of the conversation, I gave a suggestion.

"With the path you taught me before, I can go the rest by intuition.

Gann-san, please go release the Feudal Lord and them.

If it's now, you can still make it right? "

"Are you stupid? There's no way I can let you go by yourself"

"But, I am the only one who can stop Ganglabe-san.

The only one who can release the Feudal Lord is Gann-san.

It's the same as cooking. Splitting work."

“You…”

“Let’s stop it, Gann-san”

I say as I turn back to the path that I came.

“Alright? This stupid fight”

I say nihilistically once again.

“….Stupid.

Understood. I’ll accompany you until we reach the Feudal Lord’s room.

After that is a straight path. Don’t get lost”

Woot, nihility success!

Woops, this isn’t the time to play around.

Even I can read the mood.

Hurriedly turning back and running down the path that we had come from, suddenly there was someone in the corner of the corridor.

A person hugging his knees to become smaller.

Despite being a large man, he appears small.

“Gann-san. That, who is it?”

“Ha? Wait, isn’t it Adora!”

Gann-san stops with his emergency brakes, and rushed over to the person named Adora.

“Oi, are you alright Adora!?”

“Hn? …. Ahh, Gann, huh. It’s been a while. I’m alright.”

“As if you’re alright! What exactly happened. Were you assaulted by Ganglabe and the others?!”

“Ahh, that’s right….”

Adora-san says in a small voice unbefitting of his frame.

“At first, I thought it was easy….

We tried to arrest them when they first arrived in front of the castle, then our comrades collapsed rapidly….. I don't get it, I don't understand what magic was used at all….

At the entrance, with overwhelming archery abilities, the twenty odd soldiers were all made powerless under just one person…..

When I heard that from my contact, I ambushed them here as the final fortress….

Which is why I'm like this now…..”

“What do you mean. You don't have any injuries right”

“THAT'S-RIGHT-I'M-NOT-EVEN-INJURED-NO-I'M-NOT-EVEN-HIS-OPPONENT-NO-I-CAN'T-EVEN-BE-HIS-ENEMY-NO!!!”

Suddenly Adora-san shouted.

And then, held both shoulders and was shaking.

Unable to focus his eyes, horribly frightened.

“That is a monster…..! Defending against my attack, with two fingers, my one attack with all my strength couldn't even cut a swordsman's arm…. I won't forget those eyes….! Those eyes looking as if I was less than a bug….. That's not human….

Wh-what is it I wonder.

This face which looks as if he saw some unidentified monster.

“Gann-san. Who is this?”

“Ahh. One of my few acquaintances, Adora.

He is famous as the best soldier in this castle.

There is practically no person in this castle that can win against him”

“Someone like that, why is he like this?”

“Well your…. it's the act of Ganglabe and the others”

“Yes…..”

Adora-san said seeming depressed.

“The one I fought was, the man called Cougar….”

“Acha~…..”

Your luck is just too bad.

That person, has chopped boulders with his sword before.

“Isn’t this amazing!” he’ll also say as he smashes armours with his fists.

He’s way too superhuman that I back away from him, he is.

“Excuse me, Adora-san?”

“….Who are you”

“Ummm….”

It seems If I say something thing ‘I’m from Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp, desu’ here, it’ll get complicated.

“I’m an acquaintance of Gann-san.

About Cougar-san, he is an acquaintance or something….”

“Just leave me alone….”

Ah, this is bad.

His heart’s been fractured.

“Adora-san, is fighting the only thing you can do?”

“Ah?”

“Like I said, Adora-san, don’t you have something you can do other than fighting?”

“I don’t….”

“In that case, won’t you come with me?”

“Eh?!”

Next to me, Gann-san was super-duper surprised, I continue.

“I was just looking for someone who can do some muscle work.

Once this mess has ended, why don’t you quit being a guard and be a cook

with me?”

“Why do I have to do a poor man’s job like as a cook”

“Then, will you continue to be a soldier?

Can you continue fighting?”

It’s probably impossible right…

Adora-san too, shook his head lightly.

“The battlefield, isn’t just a world of swords, bows and magic you know.

Cooking is war as well”

“Wa…r?”

“Yes. The one who makes and the one who eats. These two battle without honour nor humanity.

If they say it’s good, then the one made it wins, if they say it’s bad then the one who eats it wins. (TL: Really?…) Making a meal where you can’t even find scraps, one where your appetite is satisfied, making the one who eats consent. This is the battle of chefs.

I found this battle to be my raison d’etre.”

Nevertheless, the base of the fun comes from the joy of the one who eat it though.

“How about it? If the current battlefield doesn’t match yourself, try searching for a different battlefield”

“Different… battlefield”

“Everything in this world is a fight with something. Each and every person is different, whether that fight is something you seek from outside or seek from inside yourself.

I sought an internal fight.

The tension of cooking, the impatience, the concentration… those are so tough that it’s beyond your imagination.

It’s because it’s a dish that you’ll be giving someone to eat. You don’t want

them to ever say that it tastes bad.

The technique and courage I earned doing that are my treasure even now.

Nowadays it has become a『Weapon』for the sake of my comrades”

Actually, when it was decided I was to cook at my company’s drinking party for the first time, I’ve always been bracing myself to not want to fail.

Mobilising all the cooking knowledge and technique I had accumulated, I made it desperately.

The result, everyone was delighted.

However, I couldn’t accept it.

If that broth was thicker, if that meat was more refreshing.

When I noticed, I continued finding flaws that only I could find.

That is, my internal fight.

As a result, even now I can make it well and I also improved.

“Adora-san. If you wish for a different external battle then.

If you feel like it, it’ll be nice if you will fight alongside me.

I don’t mind if you don’t answer right away.

Since we are in a rush too.

Let’s go, Gann-san.”

“O-ohh”

We ran again.

However, I think I want to reflect on that conversation just now.

So embarrassing!!!

What am I showing off, what external, what internal!

I ended up saying those words because that was a speech I read in a manga but, now that I’m recalling it, it’s just my dark history!!

Returning all the way to the entrance, it has already become pandemonium there.

The people who were injured from an arrow were receiving medical treatment, and there were a lot of people who are groaning from the treatment's pain.

"Shuri, don't think about it"

"Y-yes"

Yes, I can't think about it.

If I empathise too much, I think I'll vomit.

"Also…. Shuri. I stop here"

"Eh?"

Before I had realised, Gann-san came to a standstill.

"Go straight from here, up the stairs, take a left, and the room at the end of the corridor is Gingus-sama's office.

Please. Other than you, I have no one else to rely on.

The fact they had stopped even Adora means that there is no one in this castle which can rival Ganglabe and the others.

No one, but you"

"……"

Seeing Gann-san lowering his head, I nodded.

"I understand. I'll stop them"

"….Apologies"

"Ah, also. After you save the Feudal Lord, please bring him along"

"What?"

"They have to talk, don't you agree. Father and son"

Being confined because of a quarrel, that's sad don't you think?

"That's why I leave it to you"

"….I don't guarantee it"

"Even if you only put in the effort"

“Understood”

“Then, I’m going”

I ran.

Down the corridor, up the stairs, earnestly doing nothing but following the given route.

Fortunately I didn’t pass by anyone, I also didn’t meet encounter any dangerous eyes.

What I thought along the way was, what I should say when I meet them.

What is something good that someone like me, who is irrelevant to the disputes of nobles, should say?

The number of fights I’ve been in, was only an amount that I could count on one hand when I was a child.

I got along well with my friends, my relationship with my parents wasn’t bad either.

If you put that another way, it meant I ran away from fights.

Maybe I’ve never had someone who I seriously wanted to fight as an enemy.

But, nevertheless I.

If I want to reach a conclusion to this fight.

I think I’ll have to do it.

Those words, they weren’t even things I would think of.

Things like sayings from manga and anime I saw.

I noticed that they were very flimsy in front of reality.

Those words have meaning because the characters inside that story are in that setting.

Even if I say it, there’s no meaning.

But even then I have something I want to say.

I will say it.

“I made it….!”

It was when I finally struggled to the front of that room, and put my hands on the door knob.

I could hear a voice from inside.

“It seems what I want to say is, ‘Return Shuri’.

We’ve complained about this and that up to here but, that’s all we want.

We don’t want your apologies *etc.*

But, if you are to apologize, pay that apology with something that has form.

That is, territory, gold or whatever.”

This is! The voice Ganglabe-san uses when he’s evil!

“After all, we had become criminals, been confined, and had our comrade arrested.

If you are to apologize then do it with something appropriat-”

Oh noes, the conversation changed into a threat!

“There’s no neeeeee~d for that!!”

Since I was in a rush, the door ended up opening much earlier than I had thought and I tripped.

However, I showed my figure to everyone as I tumble with a forward roll.

“This is the end of the fight!”

Somehow it seems my entrance ended up being something similar to a third rate hero. Dark history - number two. However, the impact it had on everyone seemed to have been amazing as everyone was looking over here and stiffening up. Are? Could this be a success?

“Long time no see, Ganglabe-san”

“O-ohhh…”

Ganglabe-san is trembling or something?

“Shuri!! You were alright!” (Ganglabe)

“Shuri!” (Ahrius)

“You were alright,su? Shuri!” (Teg)

“Hambu-….Shuri, I’m glad you’re alright” (Riru)

“Geez, you made us worry you fool!” (Cougar)

Ororo!?

Ganglabe-san comes and hits my shoulder.

Ahrius-san says ‘I’m glad’ emotionally.

Teg-san hits my back.

Riru-san drools for some reason.

Cougar-san was grinding against my head.

Ahh, that’s why I thought of so many things such as, I sure am loved by everyone naa, or, I sure made you worry naa.

“Ow ow, I’m fine, I’m alright.

It hurts. Riru-san, you’re drooling”

“Oops, excuse me. *Slurp*”

While Riru-san was wiping away her drool, I broke free from Cougar-san’s bindings.

I saw Ekress-san, and the person next to her.

“Umm, Is it, Gingus-sama?”

“That’s right”

Gingus-sama was looking more exhausted than I had thought.

His silver hair, darker than Ekress-sama’s was cut evenly, a pretty boy with fox like eyes.

And a thin macho. Damn it.

“Hello nice to meet you. I’m Shuri Azuma.

Can I speak with you?”

“What? I don’t think there’s anything to say right. It’s conversation which ends when Ore-sama dies.”

“I heard it by accident outside. Your form of apology and such.

It’s idiotic.”

“What did you say!!”

At my one word, Gingus-sama was enraged.

“Like I said, trying to die as a form of apology is idiotic.

Receiving territory and compensation money *etc.*

For now I was alright so, shouldn’t we end this already?”

“Don’t fuck around! This is a political problem!

Coming out here all of the sudden, what do you understand, how can you say you can end anything!”

“No, the victim, me, is saying ‘let’s end it’. So isn’t that good enough?”

“Even if you say end it, it’s no longer a problem which can end!

It’s either I die or, you guys obediently abide!”

“Then, is that alright?

I heard the story. Such as Ekress-sama being a girl or, that it was devised by Gingus-sama or, that Ganglabe-san snapped *etc.*

To actually want to die based on that, isn’t that the worst way to run away from reality”

“For a problem which can end with the head of someone from the Feudal Lord’s clan, don’t put it together with words like running away from reality!

A question of who’s to blame, won’t end if the person involved doesn’t take responsibility, and accept punishment!”

“This is why the moment you chose to die, you are running away from your responsibilities”

Although in a lot of the folk tales, there was seppuku and such.

I think of that. There is no meaning to responsibility.

The punishment as the death penalty with regards to its crime. Compared to that, if the pain of the victims and their families can be healed even slightly then, it might be possible.

However, because of that there are also people who can't be healed.

Since the things they lost can't be returned. Or, maybe for the sake of cut-off feelings.

However it's different this time.

I am alive. Not dead.

And I, the person himself does not request for the punishment called death.

That's only natural. Because even though I was tossed in a jail, thanks to Gann-san it wasn't that painful.

Which is why I, don't want Gingus-sama to die for me.

I don't desire vast amounts of compensation money or land.

I was able to meet everyone safely. That in itself is good enough.

It can't be helped even if I'm said to be naive, right. In this warring period, this world of rivalling warlord, it seems that sort of thinking is fatal, right.

However, that is me.

Azuma Shuri is that kind of person.

"If you want to take responsibility, please live.

Please continue apologizing.

Even if you won't be forgiven, even if you'll be yelled at.

What you can do for the other person is.

Continue to apologize.

And then decades later, for the words of『Forgiveness』from the other person.

Continue waiting for it, without requesting it.

Isn't that a way you take responsibility?"

“Such a thing, a stupid method-”

“Yes, I’m sure it’s stupid.

However, you have been deprived of your right as an heir for the Feudal Lord’s clan right.

The only people who can agree to that method of taking responsibility are only the people of the castle.

Moreover we cannot consent to a single thing.

Which is why, you cannot only tell us『You’re Sorry』.

Thus please take an action other than money”

Even when Japanese politicians or CEOs or companies break the regulations.

I think that there are many videos of them lowering their heads during press conferences.

As for me, I can’t really find myself to agree to end it with just apologies and fines.

If he is seriously sorry that is.

Saying that no matter what happens it’ll be alright.

It’s because he always think that.

“That is, the『Apology』I request”

“….With that method, there’s no way you people can agree”

“No, I also think that it’s better to do that”

Suddenly, I heard a different voice.

Looking towards the door, there stood the Feudal Lord and Gann-san.

“Gann-san”

“Ahh, I’ve done the rescue.

As you said, I’ve brought him here”

Since Gann-san gave me a thumbs up, I too returned it.

The Feudal Lord steps inside the room and, going pass my side and stands in

front of Gingus-sama.

“YOU IDIOT!”

And then, a magnificent sound rings, thud.

The Feudal Lord dropped a fist onto Gingus-sama’s head.

“You, just how much are you going to cause trouble for the people around you, till you are satisfied!

Not just me, but even involving the mercenary corps and another country!

Because of your thoughtlessness, this territory is in a dangerous situation! Do you understand!”

“….I’m sorry”

Gingus-sama, without even rubbing at his head which was hit, looks down and apologized.

“”How do you plan to repay the debt! Say it!”

“Yes…. the punishment due for me”

“This isn’t a problem which will somehow work out with just your punishment!

Stripping away your right of heir is obvious! The right of heir will belong to only Ekress!

The punishment to you is, you’ll be sent to an unimportant post, and your right of unifying the army shall be stripped!

The apology to Newbyst will end with Gann’s death penalty!

Ekress, you too! Prepare for punishment for not stopping your little brother running wildly while being his elder brother!”

“Ok~, let’s stop here”

Since the conversation is somehow heading towards a ridiculous direction, I’m stopping this.

“Feudal Lord. Please wait a minute”

“Ahh, Shuri-dono.

Apologies. Our family's shame shall be dealt within our…."

"Rather than family, you are also the cause"

I have to resolve myself here, and say it.

"After Ekress-sama, when Gingus-sama was born, why did you not return Ekress-sama's treatment back to normal?"

"That is our family's problem, Shuri-dono"

"No, since I've already been involved in this, it cannot be helped.

Feudal Lord. This is what I think.

Everything that has happened, isn't it because you were superficial"

"What do you mean….?"

"It is as I say.

Forcefully making Ekress-sama to be your successor, and even though Gingus-sama was born you kept it as is, birthing friction between brothers. In addition you hid the existence of the eldest son, leaving him to do the dirty work.

Everything is born from the Feudal Lord's thoughtless superficiality.

In addition, had you really not noticed?

That in Gingus-sama's present, there was something included that you were bad with"

Everyone other than the Feudal Lord was surprised.

The Feudal Lord made a slight scowl.

I was just trying to lead him along but, it seems I hit the mark.

It's strange to begin with.

To the person himself, an allergic reaction comes with a pain and anguish that other people cannot understand.

That person, continuously absorbing in a material which causes an allergic reaction is the same as committing suicide. Looking at the inflammation that occurred just by holding it in his hands, it is impossible that the person himself does not know.

That’s when I thought.

Using the one thing I didn’t know, why he did he take it out without understanding and continued to use it.

However, this is too unnatural. As long as you see that reaction, truthfully it should’ve been tough to even hold it. It’s simply impossible to continue to have a nonchalant air during the banquet.

Another thing is, he didn’t notice even though it has been peculiarly made. Since this was way too unrealistic, I had excluded it.

What came into my head finally, was the most unbelievable possibility.

He knew, and used it.

Enduring the painfulness of the allergic reaction and continue using it, there’s a possibility he used it on purpose.

When I arrived at this, I laughed it off, denying it without a thought.

However, since no other possibility came to mind, I tried to lead him on purposely but……

Somehow, it seems this is correct.

“Why did you do it? It should have been extraordinarily painful.

If you hold in in your hand, that part would definitely form a rash and itches right.

And if you drink it, the itchiness and pain would accompany you to your mouth, throat and inside your stomach.

Why did you use it?”

“That is….”

“Gann-san, why do you think it is?”

“Ha? Me?”

Gann-san was a little perplexed being suddenly brought up but, thinks a little then said.

“Let’s see… maybe because by collapsing himself, there is something which to

benefit from?

Or, maybe because by collapsing himself, there is someone he wants to give a disadvantage to?

The other would be, he desires to commit suicide?”

“Feudal Lord, how about it?”

The possibilities said right now, I had also thought of them.

If it’s to benefit then, for whose sake?

Who does he want to give a disadvantage to?
Being inside the jail where information was limited, I couldn’t get out an answer at all.

Now then, what is the answer I wonder?

“…..Unlike how Shuri-dono appears, you are quite wise.

I never would’ve thought that you would be able to say that much”

And then, the Feudal Lord said as if he accepted.

Giving up.

I could feel that from his entire body.

“The ones who I wished to provide benefits to be my children. Gann, Ekress and Gingus.

The one I wanted to give a disadvantage to was, just one person, now and even in the past.

My legal wife.”

Time stopped.

What did he say just now?

He wanted to disadvantage his legal wife?

“Gingus. You didn’t think up of this plan by yourself right?”

“Eh?”

“You didn’t right. You should have gained the right of heir after I had

collapsed, with your military exploits.

However, my wife thought of something above that.”

“T-that’s impossible. Mother didn’t do”

“I had known”

The Feudal Lord said.

“With your ability, information leaks. Using your plan against you, my wife was making the necessary preparations from behind the scenes.

When you ordered your subordinates to try to make an iron wine glass, you had originally planned to only use a small amount of iron right?

In that wine glass, an excessive amount of iron was used.

I had taken that and used against that instead”

“W-wait a moment Father. I had not known that either.

It’s true that the Lady has deep jealousy but….”

Fu, laughed the Feudal Lord.

That is, a laugh of scorn.

“Deep jealousy? That’s not it. That person doesn’t just have deep jealousy. She is too ambitious.

When she found out Gingus has no talent for internal affiars, my wife jumped in joy. Secretly that is.

Since like this, if she places Gingus into the Feudal Lord, she could, as her guardian take authority. And then if she has Gingus’s military ability, there is a possibility to expand the territory. By doing that, the money that goes to her also increases.

That’s how she is. That person.”

Seeing the appearance of the Feudal Lord steadily changing from his scornful smile to a serious expression, I finally realised.

This person, had been enduring this whole time.

Before the allergy, the twistedness born from his family’s rift, always, he had

been enduring and resisting it.

“Truthfully, I had loved Gann’s mother and my concubine from the bottom of my heart. I’ll say this so that there are no misunderstandings but, Gingus. I also love you.

However, my wife imprisoned my concubine, and banished Gann’s mother. It was too late when I had noticed.

I hated her from my heart. Why I asked, why was there a need to go that far!

Which is why, taking advantage of the situation this time, my revenge should have succeeded if it was possible to convict her”

“And where is the legal wife now?”

“Ahh, if it’s her then, it seems she took advantage of this mess, thought that the situation had gotten worse. She ran away immediately. Coupled with the fact that a messenger had come from Newbyst, she probably abandoned this territory, seeing that it has no future.”

“T-then, Ore-sama”

“You were thrown away. By that woman.

Originally, I had thought to further take advantage of this mess, chase down all of the wrongdoings that woman had done and wanted to convict her but…..

Shuri-dono. Everything has gone wrong due to your actions. My wife ran away, my son, treason. The responsibility is the execution of my illegitimate child.

This situation is terribly bad”

It seems that somehow I had done something extremely not good.

“That is your excuse right, Feudal Lord”

Just as I was feeling slightly down, Ganglabe-san said.

“At that banquet, Shuri took action because he was concerned about your body.

To the people who came from outside, to say that they suddenly saw through your plan to that extent is ridiculous.

In the first place, Shuri was concerned about your body. Rather than saying your thanks, what is your intention by condemning him?”

Oohh, Ganglabe-san is angry!

He’s not even being polite as he speaks.

“Then what should be done? In this situation.

The situation of the fight between the first prince’s faction and the second prince’s faction is changing because of the second prince’s faction’s failed revolt. It’s certain that the second prince’s faction, as according to the official of the first prince’s faction, has a high chance of being exterminated.” (Lord) “I-if I hold them back” (Ekress)

“It’s impossible Ekress. The officials of the first prince’s faction, are people who are following you because they believe that it is your ability to manage internal affairs that is necessary for the territory.

In this ideal opportunity, there’s no reason not to attack” (Lord)

“It is no gentle conversation” (Cougar)

Here, Cougar-san interjected.

Leaning on the wall, folding his arms.

Ohhh, so nihilistic and cool!

“Well, it’s no longer a conversation which concerns us. Right, Ganglabe” (Cougar)

“Ahh, that’s right. That’s how it is thinking about it properly. We also finished rescuing Shuri.

Let’s go, you guys” (Ganglabe)

“Understood, Ganglabe” (Ahrius)

“Un, Roger” (Riru)

“Wa-wa-wait! Please wait a moment!” (Shuri)

Ehh, what is everyone starting to say!?

Everyone’s looking as if it’s obvious!?

“Ehh!? Are we leaving?!”

“Obviously. Our goal is Shuri, saving you.

From the conversation just now, it’s understood that this territory no longer has the combat ability to chase us. After that, the meaningless fight between the two prince’s factions and with Newbyst’s intervention, there won’t even be a trace left.” (Cougar) “Exactly. What Cougar said is the most extreme case.

Shuri, we are a mercenary corp. A mercenary corps treats comrades important above all. But, we do not forgive enemies. It’s necessary to never give mercy to an enemy in order to live.

This time, Shuri. The moment we were able to save you, we have accomplished our goal.” (Ganglabe)

“No no, even if that was the case, to pull the stairs from them here is a little….”

(TL: はしご外す - To be lonely at the top/abandon friends/people once you are better than them) Speaking realistically, acting as he says and leaving this territory immediately is probably the best option.

It doesn’t appear like there’s anything positive for the mercenary corp even if we stay any longer.

However, I don’t want to abandon them here.

Ekress-sama is also looking over here.

It’s written on her face, ‘Please help me’.

This person who had always endured and tried her best.

To run away here acting like I know nothing is.

That’s way too excessive, I think.

“Then, it’s fine if I can solve this problem right? Ganglabe-san”

“Ha? No, our problems are already over, Shuri.”

“No, it’s not over. We haven’t received our land”

“As if we still have it now”

“Then, if we could receive it?”

“No, I don’t want the same thing that happening at Alturia to happen again.

Between land and comrades, I’ll take comrades”

“How chivalrous….. However, this time I have an idea as well”

I faced the Feudal Lord once again, facing away from Ganglabe-san who was making a strange expression.

“Feudal Lord. What would happen if the fight from here on disappears, the fight between the first prince and the second prince’s factions?”

“What is it? Suddenly”

“Please tell me.”

At my serious manner of speaking, the Feudal Lord answered me.

“If the faction’s fight dies down then, certainly, 40% of my worries dies down.

However, the remaining 60%. The rampage of the army and Gingus’ punishment is still remaining though, what about it?”

“I have an idea”

Although I call it an idea, this is just a type of『shifting responsibility』though.

Telling him my idea, the Feudal Lord thought for a little bit.

“I see… Indeed, if it’s that method then, the remaining 50% will also resolve.”

“The 10%, is it the emotions?”

“Exactly. However, if its arguments based on emotions then, it’s possible to resolve it over time. Seeing Gingus and Ekress’ work from here on, there might be those whose opinions even change.”

“What about you Ganglabe-san? Will you help me?”

“….There’s no way about it”

Ganglabe-san roughly scratches at his head and laughed.

“You’ve also done quite a bold thing yourself! You idiot!”

“Ow! I said it hurts!”

Then he came and rubbed my head roughly too. It simply hurt.

“Teg! Gather up all the subordinates from the castle town!”

“Roger, su”

“Ahrius will gather all the soldiers within the castle! If they’re facing you, I don’t think the soldiers will resist either! All the more if you take Gingus.”

“Understood”

“Cougar, you’ll be『Cleaning up』! The ones who are under the influence of that person, arrest every last one of them!”

“Got it. I’m a little reluctant though. Even though we can just leave this place right now”

“Riru will install the venue! Quickly alright!”

“Hambu…..”

“Do that later!”

Ignoring Ganglabe-san who was giving out instructions quickly, I made advance arrangements with the Feudal Lord.

“I’ll leave the contents of the speech to you. Also, I’ll leave dealing with aftermath and the reason to you as well.”

“Alright. You’ll be doing something crazy aren’t you”

“However, it’ll be even with this right?”

“The best reprisal. Since with this, that person cannot come back”

“Then I leave it to you”

I end my conversation with the Feudal Lord, and stood in front of Ekress-sama and Gingus-sama.

“With this 90% of everything will end. We can finally end this affair.”

“You…. don’t you hate me? The one who locked you up was, Ore-sama. Why can you go so far?”

Hmm, now that he says it, that is true.

“Please let me hit you once later, I had thought but that’s not very like me. It’s because the payback given by Ganglabe-san and the others was enough.”

“Shuri-kun. I think it’s strange too. Like, why can you go so far”

Ekress-sama…..

“I can only cook you know? Everything else is your job. Besides….”

I looked at Gann-san.

Right now, Gann-san was giving instructions to his spy subordinates. For the sake of a certain thing that I had asked for.

“It’s because I owe a favour to Gann-san. The reason why my jail lifestyle wasn’t too painful, is thanks to Gann-san. This is the repayment for that.”

“No, even then…..”

“Besides Ekress-sama”

I made a promise.

“If you don’t clean up this problem, you couldn’t leave this territory even when you want to right?”

“Ha?”

“Like I said, aren’t you coming with me?”

Ekress-sama was astonished. (TL:（ ゜Д゜）<- picture this, bokaan) “I mean, you said in the jail that you wanted to quit being successor and come.

Was that a lie?”

“…..Fu, hahahaha”

Eh? Why is she laughing?

“That’s true. We did make that kind of promise. I think it’s already impossible though”

“Why impossible? Ahh, is it because Ganglabe-san heard or something”

“Right. I was careless. If it wasn’t for that, I should’ve been able to go though”

“It’s not like there’s a problem even if he heard?”

“Shuri, it’s a big problem”

Ganglabe-san came and grabbed a tight hold on my head.

Are? It looks like he's smiling but, I can feel an aura like that of a lions….?

"This person, tried to join into our comrades acting innocent. Additionally, she's a person on the side of those who arrested Shuri but, the reason she gave is because she didn't want her own position.

Like we can let such a person become our comrade"

"B-but"

AAAAAAHHHHH, the grinding caaaaameeee…..!?

"No buts. I won't approve of her."

"Ehh, can't you do something about-"

"-that? No"

"OWOWOWOW, IT'LL BREAK IT'LL BREAK. Various things will end up spouting out. From the gap, something flesh-coloured will end up leaking"

"Fufu, it's good that you seem happy"

"Right? You should definitely come OWOWOWWOWOWOW"

"Are you still saying that you moron"

Owwwwwww.

After that, with cooperation from everyone of Ganglabe-san's subordinates, we had them move the pots in the kitchen.

"How is it the setup? Ahrius-san"

"It's coming along smoothly Shuri. There's no need to worry. Since the rest is Ganglabe and the Feudal Lord's job."

Right now, we are in the plaza of the town around the castle.

We moved all the pots, setting them up from the plaza to the connecting road.

And currently I, together with Ahrius-san am serving up the Motsunabe from the pot, distributing it to the people of the town.

"Oi, can this completely red dish be eaten?"

The townspeople have their doubts and are coming to ask.

“This is a hot pot made with red choy”

“Oh that. Indeed, if you put that into soup, the colour will move. However, it’s also rare for it to smell this good.”

“Right? Since I used a pig’s internal organs”

“O-organs!? Is this stomach!?”

They were extremely scared.

No good, if this continues they won’t eat it.

“Come now, first you donn”

“Bufua!?”

Despite that I directly put it in his mouth.

While the townsperson-san was surprised, he also tried to vomit but…..

Biting it, he changed his actions slightly.

“…..This, is good. I had thought organs and such were unthinkable but….”

“It’s slightly spicy and the texture is interesting right?”

“Indeed…. even though there’s a chewy, firm texture, the flavour of the meat is there”

Townsperson-san accepts the plate from my hands as if he was snatching it away, rapidly eating it.

“I see… this is a dish with just the right amount of spiciness of the red choy and the meaty flavour of the organs. You can enjoy the deliciousness of the cabbage as well as the bean sprouts as it soaks up the flavour. The taste of the chives is also good. Without this it seems it’ll have a heavy taste.

However I don’t understand. The base of this dish, the soup. What is this? Something made of meat and vegetables…. no, just vegetables? No, I don’t know….”

“Distributing Motsunabe~ A dish which you can enjoy with that sort of taste”

Seeing the sight of one person eating it like it’s good, it seems the other people also let down their guards.

Accepting it one by one, they were eating it like it was delicious.

“However, you did a drastic thing, didn’t you. Shuri”

Without stopping her hands, Ahrius-san was laughing while amazed.

“Exhausting and consuming the main assets of the first and second prince’s faction, their food, making a situation where they cannot continue to fight any longer.

Additionally, amongst the soldiers that we had oppressed, deciding that those who were under the influences of the legal wife were to be arrested and punished.

Because in the end, all the reason for fighting ended up being forced onto the legal wife.”

Hahaha, even I slightly thought I overdid it.

Hearing the conversation, in the end, the legal wife’s ambition and jealous heart had caused pain to the Feudal Lord.

It ended up throwing Gann-san, Ekress-sama, and Gingus-sama’s fate out of order.

And then taking advantage of the uproar, running away, abandoning her husband, child, subordinates, everything.

Even trash have their limits right.

Despite this we ended up deciding to push all the responsibility onto her at just the right time.

She’s not here and or perhaps I should say she’s the ringleader so, I thought it’s alright.

Around the time when the Feudal Lord stated his opinion.

“I see. Like this, my wife can’t return even if she wanted to.”

and accepted it happily.

Just how much did he hate her? It’s suitable, that.

Right now, on top of the plaza’s stage that Riru-san made, the Feudal Lord and

Ganglabe-san were, shall I say addressing or perhaps, awarding.

Pushing the blame for the cause of this time's scandal to the legal wife.

Gingus-sama and Ekress-sama were trying to do something about that, however because of the subordinates under her influence, they couldn't take action.

Ganglabe-san and the others set everyone free with their full-frontal breakthrough.

Celebrating that, with the ringleader gone, deciding to treat everyone to a celebratory cooking, and blessing the new and born again territory.

We spread a made up story from the so called person involved, 「What an opportunistic story! How dare you, making up a story like that」.

And then, as a reward for resolving that incident, he is being bestowed land and a medal.

Although I say that, it seems that the Feudal Lord is thinking that they can no longer manage the land.

Well, according to the person himself.

"The castle's elites were defeated by just five people? I have no face too, it's probably time for me to retired as well."

So he says.

Basically, Gingus-sama is practically being the heir of the territory, and seems to be directed under Ganglabe-san.

Ekress-sama however…..

"Shuri-kun, shall I help over here?"

Since earlier, she has left her post and has been coming over here.

Each time, Ganglabe-san would be launching a terrifying aura over here. It's scary.

"No, please distribute the dish at your post. It's not finished right. Since I used a considerable amount."

“I am not only distributing the dish, I’m handing out condiments. Since I’m a little free, I came over. It’s made nicely huh, this Sky Onion.”

Ekress-sama looked at the masses.

Yes, when I made the Motsunabe, I took the opportunity and made condiments with sky onions.

Finely cutting it so that you can sprinkle the amount you like, getting them to hand it out.

Doing so, the Kimchi Motsunabe quickly changes to Jjigae. It can’t go that far but, you can also add the sourness as you like.

See, that child over there is in tears because he added too much Sky Onion condiment.

“However, you really ended the uproar with cooking huh”

What? Speaking out so sincerely all of a sudden.

“Thank you, Shuri-kun. It’s thanks to you”

“I might have ended up making the mess bigger accidentally though”

“No, even so, you completely exterminated the Lady’s influence. It also ended without me becoming heir. Making Gingus heir, the officials also have no ingredients so it isn’t the time to fight for power and thus, you also urged the military officials in order to cooperate.

Thank you very much”

Ahh. Err…..

What is it, having a beauty like Ekress-sama saying it to that extent, it sure is awkward….

“Please take care of me from here on ok”

“Yes, of course”

Well of course, since you’ll be a comrade from here on.

“Alright, I’ve got your oath”

“Eh? Did you say something?”

“No, nothing. Now, it’s a joyous banquet. Let’s distribute it quickly”

“Ahh, yes”

Somehow it feels like she wasn’t being very clear.

Well it should be fine.

In the end, like this, this is the reason Ganglabe-san with this territory, obtained the country.

It’s still quite far till that point though.

After that….

It’ll be perfect if we could grasp the whereabouts of the legal wife.

It’ll be good if that person wasn’t scheming something bad though.

(Author’s note: Sorry! My grandma said “Take me by car~” so, when I was optimistic “She’ll probably go home right away”, it took longer than I had thought, and the post was late.

Really sorry.)

Chapter 36 - Conclusion and Motsunabe (Inside Chapter)

“I see, so the incident has been resolved”

“Yes, Princess”

“Good, Shuri is over there. On the way, it’ll also be good to enjoy myself with his cooking for the first time in a long while.”

“What about the letter?”

“Indeed. As long as it doesn’t become a reference it’s good. It’s fine if you say『If you have confirmed the truth as innocent then, it is fine if we can confirm that 』.

In the first place we are trying to obtain Shuri, if it succeeds then, the strategy is deemed acceptable, ja”

After We call out to the spy who had come back, We thought as We lean my body to the back of the chair in the carriage.

As for the visit of Tebis Newbyst. Most of that aim had ended up being lost, nou.

Although We said that to the spy, there can only be a good show even if We go visit just like this, nou.

A few days ago, from the information of our spy, We learnt that Shuri was arrested at Sounity. The content was doubtful but, there was no reason for the spy units I trust to lie, and when We found out the truth, We thought this is a good opportunity, noja.

First, ask about the reason for arrest regarding the chef that we are on friendly terms with. Using this as a formal reason to visit, We can arrive in Sounity while retaining the position as a Princess. If it’s like that, I can only use my authority as a『Messenger』but, if it’s『To investigate the reason for unjust arrest』then, We can use our authority as a representative of the country, as a princess. It seems somewhat absurd but, as a『Princess』, there are also things which can be allowed, no.

Next, pursue the incident regarding the chef. The person who they are friendly with is affected in the incident, and has been locked in a jail after all. To confirm that is an natural conversation. Well, whatever reason they might have but, to pursue it as the other side's responsibility, to pull out a reconsideration of their trade, if there's a chance We also think it would be good if we can turn Sounity into a vassal country as well.

And then, the most important thing is『Handing over the chef in order to verify the truth』, ja.

If We end up saying this then, We can get double the benefits.

One is, by handing him over obediently, the position of Sounity becomes less than Newbyst. Handing over a criminal to another country and forgiving the crimes committed is, whether it's the legitimate reason, that is, handing him over because he's that country's person or, whether they are a coward, yielding the judgement of the criminal to another country, ja. Originally, for the crime that occurs at one's territory, it is natural for it to be judged at that territory. If they hand him over then, it's proof that the lawfulness towards that country will come into question.

And the second point is, one of the legitimate reason We just said,『The fact that they have our country's man』. Basically, the moment the handing over is completed, We shall wield this legitimate reason and aim to『Pull in Shuri as a person of Newbyst』.

If this was established then, We shall instantly, employ Shuri into the castle as a person of our country, and planned to sever his connections with Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp.

If Shuri refuses then, We think it's possible to hire the entire mercenary corps for employment. If the handing over succeeded then『Shuri becomes a citizen of Newbyst』, and it wouldn't be strange for a certain Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp who has a bond with Shuri to be given the territory『Appointed as a Knight's Order』.

Getting Shuri, and if possible, getting Ganglabe's Mercenary Corp.

However now, that has all been ruined by Shuri, nou….

“Good grief… We say We want to meet Shuri but, it’s quite difficult nou”

Even thinking back to it now, when We met him for the first time, it would’ve have been better, even if slightly forced, to pull him in still.

Mesmerising me with just Mapo Tofu, Mapodon, Curry Rice, and then leaving us mesmerised, and not being able to meet is just.

Good grief, what a bully of a chef, nou.

“Even just not being able to eat anything good on this journey is, as much as painful, to not be able to get our hands on Shuri after coming this far is”

Really, he never acts as one expects.

Additionally, that guy wanders around, making delicious cooking wherever he goes.

Does he know how troublesome even just tracking that is?

Even though that cooking reappears, We don’t know how much it has made the castle’s imperial chefs want to cry nou.

“Oh well. Continue taking this route to Sounity. It’s been a while, shouldn’t we go meet Shuri”

“Certainly”

Telling the coachman that, the carriage started moving once again.

Accompanying us this time to the visit is, three carriages and wagons, and about three companies of the Knight’s Order, ja. Because We wish to emphasize speed, We leave marching with just this many people.

And, twenty from our spy unit. The twenty We trust, ja.

We straighten our back once again, then tried to close our eyes, surrendering our body to the shaking of the carriage.

“Princess”

“Mu?”

“In front of us, there is a carriage heading towards us”

What the Escort Knight approached my carriage to tell us was, a matter like

that.

What? Trying to approach us?

Stopping the carriage, the Escort Knights surround the carriage as if protecting it.

Seeing some people move, We too tried to slightly see from the carriage's window.

That's quite a good carriage, ja. Six guards, two coachman.

What is it, I wonder? Is it a merchant's carriage?

As We return back inside the carriage having no interest, our Escort Knight came approaching us once again.

"Princess. The other party is Renha Sounity. The legal wife of Sounity's Feudal Lord"

Hou, the legal wife of Sounity's Feudal Lord huh.

This is becoming slightly interesting, no.

We restrain the edges of our lips from slanting upwards, and said to the Knight as calm as possible.

"And? Is there something she wants? Even if it's a joke, she is stopping the carriage of royalty for a conversation, ja. Is there an appropriate reason for this?"

"Yes. I'm told she came to welcome Princess Tebis by all means"

"I see. Then, let's meet her for a bit, no"

Kukuku, interesting, nou.

After borrowing the hand of the knight to get down from the carriage, We saw a woman coming down from the halting carriage in front of me.

We go to approach the woman.

I see, she's a woman with a strong will.

Slightly transparent silver hair, trimmed at her shoulders, eyes slanting upwards like a fox. With her tall stature and overall thin figure, she wears

modest clothes for a Feudal Lord's wife. It's easy to understand if it's said to be a dress which is easy to move in, used to move outside.
(TL: Sorta like this, the hair)

That kind of woman, Renha Sounity lowers her head.

"It has been a while, Princess Tebis. This one is Renha Sounity"

"Umu, it's good to see you well, ja"

Indeed, We have met with Renha before in the past.

That was, when We had just begun been aware of my surroundings, our oldest memory.

At the castle's banquet, We faintly remember Renha having came.

"It is nothing less than Princess Tebis also becoming splendid. I hope the King is also in good health? I had wished to meet him for the first time in a while"

"His Majesty is also healthy. Nothing serious"

"Is that so, that is of the most importance"

At Renha pleasantly laughing, I wanted to click my tongue.

Even if it's said we had met in the past, it wasn't a relationship where she could speak so intimately like this.

Having met at most once, and above all Sounity is the sworn enemy, who had arrested Shuri.

"And, you probably did not come to this place to gossip. After all the Feudal Lord's wife has especially come all the way here. Something major has probably happened right?"

Since, I don't feel like exhausting myself talking long. There's nothing better than ending this quickly.

Doing so, Renha abruptly changed from a smile to a sad looking face.

"Princess. Currently, approaching our Sounity is extremely dangerous"

"What? What do you mean"

"Right about now, my son is probably raising a coup d'etat in the castle"

Coup d’etat, and so she came here huh.

“A coup d’etat is not a calm matter. Explain in detail”

“Certainly. In truth, my son excels in military and naval affairs but, he lacks study regarding domestic affairs. Being anxious, thinking about the eldest son becoming heir and taking the army and officers that he raised himself, he started a coup d’etat”

“I see.”

“Right about now, the coup d’etat has probably ended in a failure. Since Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp, who the eldest son had employed, is probably heading to subjugate it”

Liar, there’s is no way the eldest son can employ Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp having confined them.

Although it is indeed true that Ganglabe’s Mercenary Corp had moved to subjugate the situation.

“Princess. I have come to notify the Princess of that. I won’t say anything bad. Please run away”

“What do you plan on doing”

“Even if I return right now, I am unable to do anything. I might even be killed by my son”

Hou, she severed the ties resolutely, nou.

Furthermore she doesn’t use the word ‘escaping’ at all, saying that she came in such a way for our sake, trying to buy sympathy.

It’s already enough, don’t you think, going along with this stupid performance.

“Say, Renha. We wonder if that is the truth”

“Of course it is, Princess”

Shameless….

“I see.

Knights Unit. Arrest this person.”

For a moment, as if they didn't understand what I had said, neither the Knights nor Renha moved.

"What are you doing. Arrest this person for high treason"

"Y-yes"

"Princess!?"

The Knights surround Renha's carriage, making sure they cannot run away.

Amidst that, Renha was opening her eyes wide in surprise looking over here.

"Oh Renha. Are you looking down on us because We are a child? We know everything you know.

Even that you took advantage of the uproar that the second son raised to run away, requesting us for help, nou"

"T-that is a misunderstanding! Everything, yes, it's all the eldest son's fault!"

"What eldest son's fault, ja? In the first place, We have not heard of a person who could escape from that kind of situation"

"My husband let me get away! It's true!"

"Hou? According to what We know, immediately following the uproar, the feudal lord was detained, and shouldn't have been in a situation where he could talk to even you, nou.

And, you two, the relationship as husband and wife have dampened, to the point of having not even talked since quite a while back right"

At those words, Renha was made speechless.

The final blow, ja.

"Renha. We know everything. Everything, ja. You understand?"

We say, putting an emphasis on everything, and finally Renha fell to the ground, giving up.

"Knights. Seize and plunder this fellow's guards, coachmen and carriage.

It'll be a good present, ja. Take these fellows and let's go to Sounity"

"As you wish. However, I'm not quite sure about bringing along criminal?"

“It’ll work so it’s alright, ja. Now then, after We return to the carriage, complete the preparations and let us depart immediately”

“Understood”

My my. Even going along with such an ill-natured woman, such an idiot, made us so exhausted, nou.

However, with this, We’ve made an excuse to meet with Shuri, so it’s acceptable, We guess.

If possible, by using that criminal We can gain even one of those benefits, that would be most satisfactory, don’t you agree.

Now then, let us meet for the first time in a while, Shuri.

(Author’s note: Once again I’m sorry for updating late (TL: Me too :v)! I ended up falling asleep (TL: hey me too, just like 5 months later)!

For now, with this, the second volume comes to a close.

I’ll make my activity log public before noon so, I would be happy if you would look over there.)